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SHE ADVANCED HESITATINGLY AND GAZED DOWN AT THE BOUND DETECTIVE WITH
STARTLED CURIOSITY.

OR,
THE ANARCHIST'S DAUGHTER.

BY E. L. WHEELER,
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK," "DENVER
DOLL," "YREKA JIM," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE CONSPIRATORS' HEADQUARTERS

"So old Coleridge is dead?"

"Yes. He died early this morning, and I
guess there are mighty few who are sorry for
it, 'twixt you and I!"

"I don't agree with you, there!" the first
speaker declared. "Mebbe the old cuss wasn't
quite so popular as he might be, among his em-
ployees, but he stood high in favor among the
upper ten!"

"Curse the upper ten!" cried the second speaker, smiting the table with his fist—"curse every one of them, I say! If they were swept from the face of the earth, then we poor slaves would stand on terms of equality with all other men."

"Bravo!" put in a third. "*Hoc die anarchy*, and death to monopolistic capital, forever! We are the people, and must be heard!"

This declaration was received with boisterous applause, by several lusty voices.

The scene of the foregoing conversation was the interior of a dingy little lager beer saloon, on Lake street, Chicago, and the time was some three months after the execution of the anarchists, Spies, Parsons, etc.

A group of men were seated about a common pine table, engaged in smoking, drinking beer, and conversing on the then all important topic of the day, for, although the bomb-throwers of the fearful Haymarket massacre were even now moldering in their tombs, the spirit of anarchy was still rife in the metropolis of the West, and apparently growing stronger each and every day.

The party at the table all were roughly-dressed, bearded, and rather ill-looking, and with one exception, were of foreign descent, three being Germans, two English, and one evidently a Spaniard.

Of the lot, however, the latter was decidedly the best looking. Although he had a dusky countenance, he possessed handsome eyes, a pleasant mouth, and jetty curling hair and mustache.

The seventh man, was not a foreigner, and was not on familiar terms with the others, although he had been invited by them to drink, and had treated, in return.

He was a prepossessing looking young man, somewhere along in the twenties, with a graceful but athletic figure; his face was smoothly shaven, and good-natured of expression; the mouth was firm but pleasant, the cheeks ruddy with the glow of health, and the eyes bright and piercing.

He was attired in an ordinary business suit and wore an overcoat and sealskin cap.

He did not appear to take any interest in the conversation at the table, nor did he venture any opinion, regarding the subject, seeming to be quite content with puffing away at his cigar.

The first speaker was a pronounced anarchist, whose speeches did much to inflame the minds of his more ignorant disciples, by whom he was regarded as a sort of king.

His name was Doc Drew, and he owned the dingy little saloon wherein anarchists congregated to discuss the situation.

It was a blustering, wintry day, and the nature of the weather, seemingly, was in keeping with their spirit of discontent.

"Well, if old Coleridge is dead, I suppose the devil will be to pay, now!" Drew said. "The mills will most likely shut down, and the poor who only now earn a pittance, will be thrown out of employment!"

"The mills will not be closed," the Spanish-looking man declared, "unless there is a strike!"

"How do you know?"

"Oh! I was given to understand that. This is just the busiest season of the year, when the mills are running to their fullest capacity."

"Then, why do you mention a strike?" Drew demanded.

"Well, maybe there won't be anything of the kind. It all depends on how old Coleridge has disposed of his property. If he has left it all to his wife, or at least left her a controlling interest, there will be no danger of a strike."

"Why not?"

"Because, there will be a change of management, and the present superintendent, Joe June, will be supplanted by another!"

"Think so?"

"I know so! June is not popular with a good many of the employees, on account of his rigid discipline. It was he who suspended some of your sons, daughters and friends, a short time ago, for smoking and rubbing snuff, in the mill. And there's plenty who bear the present superintendent no good will, you can depend upon it!"

"You are right there," growled Simon Schmidt, one of the group. "Dot man Jones he suspended mine girl Katrina, shust for chewing gum, during work hours, und I hear him been heard to say dot effry anarchist ought to be hanged, shust like poor Spies an' der udders!"

"Oh! that's him, you bet!" put in Drew. "I hate the fellow worse than the devil. He is dead against us, and sides with corporations and monopolies, because he feathers his own nest at their expense. He don't like me so very

much, neither, because I gave him a piece of my mind, the other night!"

"How was that, Doc?" demanded a chorus of voices.

"Because he had the audacity to accompany my Dolly home from the mill. You know my Dolly is the prettiest girl at the mills, and it appears June has been paying attentions to her. She is young and susceptible, and June isn't bad looking and commands a good salary; so it seems Dolly has so far approved of his advances as to allow him to see her home! It riled me, I can tell you, and I just told him that I was an anarchist, and wouldn't have my daughter courted by a man in favor of monopoly!"

"Good for you!" exclaimed Isidor Plaquet, the Spaniard. "The fellow needs a thrust of the knife for his impudence. If he wants to favor capitalists, and grind down the poor man, let him cast his net for capitalists' daughters—not ours!"

"Hurray!" chimed in the others.

"But, is Joe June in favor of monopolies?" asked the young American, it being his first interruption of the confab.

"Of course he is," cried Doc Drew, smiting the table with his fist. "He dotes on monopolies and coercion. He would crush laboring men down to starvation; he would keep them down until they sunk to the lowest degree of degradation; he would rise to fortune by keeping his subjects in a state of poverty and compulsory drudgery."

"Why, listen, sir! It is but three years ago that he entered old Coleridge's employ as an ordinary laborer. He then set to work and worked into the long hours of the night to lessen the cost of the management, at the expense of his fellow-laborers' incomes. He invented several labor-saving machines, that detracted from the incomes of his fellow-workmen. He took more interest in doing that by which old Coleridge should profit the most, than he did for the humble class of which he was one."

"Of course Coleridge, miser that he was, appreciated all this, although, in a social point of view, he cared no more for Joe June than he did for the veriest dog on the street. June was a slave to his ambition to become a capitalist; he saw that by becoming Coleridge's servant and aide there was likely to be an opening in the future."

"It came. So systematically did he, by his labor-cutting ideas, crush the workingman, and add to the money-bags of his employer, that Coleridge grew to regard him with highest favor and made him general superintendent of the mills. This, of course, placed the toilers at June's mercy, and he ruled them with a tyrannical hand."

"But, he'd better go slow. The employees are organized, and June had better not try to crowd them any more or there's no telling what will happen!"

"Do you belong to the anarchists?" Plaquet asked of the young American.

"No," was the prompt reply. "I do not belong to any labor organization!"

"Humph! then you're not a self-protectionist? You do not believe in the workingman fighting for his rights?"

"Not in so far as committing murder is concerned!" the American replied. "We Americans don't believe in that sort of cowardly and barbarous thing. It is only the foreign element, who can't get along in their own country, that come over here with the idea they can run and regulate matters pretty much as they please. By the time a few more of them are cared for by the sheriff, perhaps they'll know enough to stay at home, or else conduct themselves as peaceable citizens!"

"So you argue that Spies, Parsons, Engel and Fisher, deserved to be hung, do you?" Plaquet cried, his black eyes fairly blazing.

"Yes!" the American frankly replied. "The only pity I see about the matter is, that they didn't hang Fielden and Schawb, too!"

This was saying a good deal, considering that there was heavy odds against the American; but he spoke his mind as freely as though he had a small army present, to back him up in his assertion.

The glances that the anarchists exchanged were significantly ugly, and boded the stranger no good.

"Say, look-ee here young feller, you'd better be careful how you blow off your bugle, in that way. There's them in Chicago as don't like that sort of talk, and you're likely to get into trouble!"

"Oh! that's all right. I'll run all the risks," was the calm retort. "This is a free country, and it's a man's privilege to blow off his bugle

as much as he blamed pleases, so long as he don't blow anybody up."

"Not much you can't—not in my saloon!" Drew declared, whacking the table with his clinched fist. "So the best thing for you to do is to clear out, afore you get thrown out!"

"Who'll throw me out?" the anti-anarchist demanded, with imperturbable coolness.

"I will!" roared Drew springing to his feet. "Come, boys! lend us a hand! This feller's a spy, and we'll make an example of him!"

The others arose with savage yells, but the American was already on his feet.

"Hold up, there!" he cried, authoritatively; "one word, please. I did not come here as a spy, nor to raise any trouble. You're welcome to your views, as I am to mine. I was sent here to deliver an important message, but, as the party is not here, I ask you to permit me to stay here until his arrival. Then I will peaceably take my departure."

"Who are you—what's your name?" Drew inquired, suspiciously.

"My name is Richard Bristol," was the reply. "I am a detective, better known as Deadwood Dick!"

CHAPTER II.

THE SECRET CIPHER.

THE announcement declaring the name and profession of the American caused the anarchists to start, visibly.

"As I said," Drew cried, turning to Plaquet, "he is a spy—a detective! Death to him!—curses upon him!"

"Hold!" Plaquet replied, as the saloon-keeper would have plunged forward in attack; "first, let's know about this message, and who it is for!"

"Dot vas right!" approved Schmidt. "Ve wants to know all apoud dot messages."

"If you want an explanation, you can have it!" Deadwood Dick replied. "I was sent here to find a man named Dore Dante."

"Well, have you found him?" demanded Plaquet, leeringly.

"No, I have not," Dick replied. "He does not appear to be present."

"What do you want of Dore Dante?" demanded Drew. "No such a fellow hangs out around here."

"I am assured that he does. Indeed, I am quite positive he does. So if you know the man, I would like you to tell me where I can see him."

"What do you want of Dante?" demanded Plaquet, his curiosity evidently fully aroused.

"That matters not," Dick answered, "except that I have business with him—important business, too."

"What business?" Plaquet persisted. "Perhaps if you're less close-mouthed you'll find out more!"

"I decline to state the nature of my business with him," Dick returned, "until I see him, personally."

"Well, you won't find him here!" Drew growled, "so you git out if you don't want your head broke!"

"Very well: I'll go if you say so, but a watch will be kept upon this place, and the chances are that you will get yourself into trouble through trying to screen this man, Dante."

One of the anarchists, Jacob Steinmetz by name, had managed to gain a position in the rear of the detective, without attracting attention, and he now leaped forward and struck Dick a terrible blow upon the side of the head with an empty beer bottle.

The blow would have felled an ox, and Dick dropped to the floor, unconscious.

He was instantly seized and carried into a rear room, whose only furniture was a table and a couple of chairs.

Here he was deposited upon the floor, while Plaquet proceeded to go through his pockets.

"Perhaps," he suggested in conducting the search, "we will find out what he wants of—of Dore Dante."

And his black eyes emitted a wicked gleam.

"Yes, search him thoroughly," directed Drew, who seemed to be the directing spirit. "Something ought to be found upon his person to give us an idea of what he is here for. He admits he is a detective, and it stands to reason he is here for some purpose no good to us."

In the coat was found nothing but a handkerchief. In the vest a gold watch, some pencils, a recommend to chiefs of police from the Mayor of San Francisco; in the trousers a wallet, plethora in size.

The latter attracted the searchers' attention.

"Ah! here I think we have a clew!" Plaquet

said, in delight. "This man will not likely be traveling around without something to reveal his motive!"

"You are right!" the others assented.

The pocketbook was opened. A small amount of money was found, a diamond-ring, and two rings of gold. Next followed a United States detective's credentials in the name of Richard Bristol, and two other documents of equal importance.

One was a warrant, issued from Police Headquarters, for the arrest of Dore Dante, at the instance of Cora Coleridge, for threatening the destruction of her life.

The other was a message in cipher, which read:

"7-9-18-12-13-21-19-20-4-9-5-19-21-19-16-5-3-20-19-4-1-14-20-5."

Plaquet scanned this sign message with darkening countenance, and uttered a vicious imprecation.

"What's the matter?" inquired Drew.

"Matter enough!" was the reply. "Dante is either in trouble, or else drunk again. Look! This cipher message is from him!"

"Read it."

"Here it is:

"Girl must die—Suspects!

DANTE!"

Now, what do you think of that? Has Dante made a bull of the whole business? If so, we're in hot water, sure! The girl has issued a warrant for his arrest, and placed it in this detective's hands. What does it signify?"

"There is trouble afoot!" Drew growled, while the others looked startled. "Can it be that we are suspected?"

"I don't like the looks of things. There's a screw loose somewhere. Dante would not give us away unless he was drunk. This message was intended for us without doubt, but how came it in the possession of this detective?"

"The warrant shows that there is trouble ahead," he growled. "In some way Cora has gained an inkling of the plot, and found out that Dante frequented this place. Consequently she has put this detective after Dante, and perhaps us. But how did this cipher message fall into her or the detective's possession? Has Dante met with foul play, or has he turned traitor?"

"I'll give it up!" Plaquet responded, sullenly. "But, why should he go back on us, when he is as much concerned as ourselves?"

There was another brief silence during which the men regarded each other in a way that showed that they were ill-at-ease.

"Well, what's to be done?" asked Drew, at length. "This thing must be investigated, thoroughly, and that, too, at once. We are standing upon a magazine that is likely to explode at any moment!"

Plaquet was about to reply, when the front door of the saloon opened, and a stylishly dressed young man stepped into the bar-room, advanced, and entered the rear room, through the wire screen door.

He was not a bad-looking fellow, except that his face was now as white, nearly, as that of a dead man.

At sight of the insensible detective, he started as though stung by an adder.

"Curses!" he gasped. "Where'd you get him?"

"We took him in; and now, where'd he get these, if you please?" Plaquet demanded. "This man is a detective, and was sent here to arrest you, on a warrant issued at the instance of Cora Coleridge. Now, we would like you to inform us how a message, evidently intended for us, fell into the hands of this sleuth, whose name is Bristol, and who also holds a warrant for your arrest! Have you been on another spree?"

"Nothing of the sort. You will remember that you have not seen me for one week."

"Yes!"

"Well, during that time, I have been faithfully performing my mission. I have not been out of the sick room, until to-day. You have heard the report of Coleridge's death?"

"Yes. It is the talk of Chicago."

"Well, it is false!"

"What?"

"You heard me. Chester Coleridge is still alive. He had a sinking spell, early this morning, and to all appearances died. But, he was revived, shortly after!"

"By whom?"

"By that man!" and the new-comer pointed to the insensible detective.

"How was it done?" Drew queried, evidently incredulous.

"By infusing his own blood into the veins of the invalid. But, it amounts to naught. Cole-

ridge won't go through the night. The doctor says so."

"But how about this other business?" asked Plaquet, impatiently.

"Well, don't get in a sweat, and you will find out!" Dore Dante replied, a trifle angrily. "Everything can not be told in a breath. The day after my installation as nurse for Chester Coleridge, a telegram, previously sent, brought his daughter from the medical college at Toronto, where she was about finishing her course of studies. She is a very shrewd young woman, and, after examining the old man, seemed suspicious that all was not right, and looked upon me with aversion. I was very attentive to my charge, however, but the more attention I gave him, the more suspicious she seemed to grow of me. Yesterday, I had one dose of the medicine left in the bottle, and had occasion to temporarily leave the room.

"On returning, I paused just outside, for the door was ajar, and peered through the crack. The door I had closed, on leaving the room; hence my hesitation and caution. What I saw was somewhat startling. Old man Coleridge was still asleep, as I had left him. But in the room was Cora and this detective, in the act of forcing a pet kitten to swallow the last dose of the medicine. Realizing what the danger would be to all of us, for Cora once saw me enter here, and knew I was rather outspoken in my views of anarchy, I leaped into the room and made an effort to grasp the bottle. Mad with rage, as I was, at the time, I endeavored to wrest the bottle from Cora, crying: 'I'll murder you if you give that medicine to the cat!'"

"The next I knew, I received a stunning blow and later found myself wandering in the street. How I got there, I do not know. As soon as I recovered my senses, I went back to the Coleridge house, rung the bell, and asked for Mrs. Coleridge. She received me, and I consigned to her the note you have in your possession, directing her to see that you received it, as I did not dare come here until I had scouted about. How this detective got possession of the note is more than I can tell you!"

"How did you learn about this blood-infusion business?" demanded Plaquet.

"From one of the servants!"

Then there was a brief silence.

"Trouble's ahead!" repeated Drew, grimly.

"Yes, and plenty of it," Dante assented.

"Within a day every hand in the Coleridge factory will either have to suffer a reduction of five per cent, or be thrown out of work!"

There was a fierce cry from Drew at this.

"By whose order is this?" he demanded.

"By the suggestion of Joe June!" was the reply.

"And the will—?" gasped Plaquet leaning forward, eagerly.

"Gives everything to the girl, and gives June sole management of the estate under her direction, in case of the old man's death. Plaquet, you're left, unless active means are taken!"

CHAPTER III.

A RETROSPECTION—WAS IT A BOMB?

LEAVING Drew's place, we will conduct the reader to the residence of Chester Coleridge, in one of the best residence sections of the West Side.

The elder Coleridge, owner of the Coleridge Manufacturing Concern, was very wealthy and popular.

His manufacturing plants were not connected as a body, but occupied different portions of the city, and only the boot and shoe branch of the concern was run under the proprietor's name, and it is principally with the affairs connected with this factory that we have to do.

Coleridge was by birth an Englishman, but his long residence this side of the water had thoroughly Americanized him.

It was he who, with the venerable Marcus Stearnes, bought the low land where now is the heart of Chicago. The two were then clerks, at a salary of ten dollars a month and board. The advance in real estate, and the thorough business capacities of the two young men, eventually made them millionaires; and it is at this stage we find Coleridge, now near to death from an ailment which puzzled the entire medical fraternity.

Just what was the matter with him physicians were unable to decide, although council after council had been held. Some argued one thing, and some another, and none appeared to comprehend the case, or to correctly diagnose the disease.

Mr. Coleridge had been married twice, and his first wife, the mother of his only child, had died years before our story. Mrs. Coleridge, too,

had been married before she joined fates with Coleridge, and had a son—the Dore Dante of our story—for the first Mrs. Coleridge was of French-Italian extraction.

The second Mrs. Coleridge was still living, and, also strange to say, a French-Spanish lady, also a widow previous to her second marriage, and the mother of Isidor Plaquet.

Although Dore Dante and Isidor Plaquet were of different birthrights, they had always got along well together, and, as future events will illustrate, were pards in crime.

Both were professedly in love with Cora, but more in love with her prospective fortune.

Cora fancied neither; and while she was modestly fond of Joe June, her father's superintendent, she used maidenly discretion in showing any preference.

Aware of her admiration of the handsome superintendent, Plaquet and Dante, reckless spendthrifts, gamblers, and thoroughly bad at heart, had formed a most villainous conspiracy, into which they had drawn Drew, Schmidt, Steinmetz and several others.

Leaving other developments to follow, we will visit the house of Mr. Coleridge. It was a modern dwelling, and faced on one of the prettiest streets on the west side. It was not particularly imposing in its exterior appearance, but the interior was nicely furnished, though not extravagantly.

One might have taken it for the home of a moderately well-to-do person, but hardly that of a man of Chester Coleridge's actual riches.

It was a couple of days after the date of our last chapter that found the sick-room of the invalid the scene of more than ordinary interest. Mr. Coleridge, who had passed his sixtieth year, was bolstered up on pillows in bed, and was listening to his daughter, who sat near at hand, engaged in reading a letter.

Cora Coleridge was a remarkably pretty young lady of nineteen, with a round, health-tinted face, a mouth of tempting expression, and soft hazel eyes.

She was well-educated, having graduated at an Eastern college, and, as we have before mentioned, had studied medicine at Toronto, with a view of adopting the profession of a physician—having a taste for it.

Of course she had no pecuniary need of adopting any profession; it was simply a matter of her own choice and ambition.

Mr. Coleridge was a large-built man, with a massive, kindly face, and iron-gray hair, and had always enjoyed good health until within the past three weeks, since when he had been confined to his bed by the strange malady.

The letter that Cora was reading, and which had just been delivered by the postman, was one calculated to alarm the invalid, as well as arouse his thorough indignation.

It ran as follows:

"CHICAGO, December —, 188—.

"CHESTER COLERIDGE, Sir:—Contrary to the wishes of your employees, you still continue to maintain in your employ that tyrant, Joseph June, whom you know to not only be a merciless taskmaster, but a villain of the first water. Several times your employees have respectfully requested you to remove this tyrant, whose principal delight is to inflict his spite on those under him, but you have remained deaf to the requests. Forbearance has ceased to be a virtue, and if we cannot obtain redress in any other way, we shall be compelled to resort to violence. Remove this man, Joe June, and put Dore Dante in his place, or Isidor Plaquet, and all will be well. Refuse, and we will make you trouble. If we cannot reach you in any other way, we can do it through your daughter. Remember, we mean
BOSIN ss."

The pallor in Chester Coleridge's face deepened as he listened to the threatening missive, and he uttered a faint articulation of distress, for, although a trifle better than he had been a few days before, when Cora had discharged Dore Dante, the sick man was very weak. The least over-excitement threatened to snap his thread of life in twain.

It may be proper to add, here, that Dore Dante, having had some hospital experience, had been called upon to nurse the invalid, prior to his daughter's arrival home.

When Cora arrived, her father continued to fail so rapidly that her suspicions were so aroused that all was not right, that she decided at once to get rid of Dore Dante as a nurse.

She had never liked the man, and knew that his reputation was not of the best; yet she was loth to believe him villain enough to enter into any conspiracy against her father.

Dante's actions, however, were so watchful and queer, that Cora's suspicions increased hourly that her father was a victim of foul play,

and, at last, in alarm, she sent to Police Headquarters for a detective.

In answer to her request a detective was sent, and proved to be Deadwood Dick, Jr., the daring young sleuth, who has been the central figure of so many startling adventures and hair-breadth escapes that his name has become a household word, all over the United States.

It so happened that Dick was paying a call on Chicago's chief of police when Miss Coleridge's message arrived, and he prevailed on the chief to allow him to answer the summons.

Consent being given, Dick had made his way to the Coleridge Mansion, post haste, where he was met by Miss Cora, who communicated to him her suspicion that her father was being deliberately poisoned, and that Dore Dante was the malefactor.

After listening to her story, Dick so arranged that Dante should be temporarily summoned from the sick-room.

This was done, and together, Cora and Dick proceeded to make an investigation.

There were several kinds of medicine, and among others a small vial containing about a teaspoonful of a greenish liquid.

Tasting of this, the detective found it very bitter, and proposed that he take it to a chemist, for analysis.

Cora objected to this as necessitating too much delay, and suggested another way of testing the matter. They had an old family cat, which was likely soon to die, anyhow, and why not see how the medicine would work on it?

Dick assented and they were about to put the matter to the test, when Dante rushed into the room, and threatened to murder them both, if they gave the medicine to the cat.

For this threat, Deadwood Dick promptly knocked him down, and, at Cora's request threw him out of the house.

Later, she concluded to have Dante arrested, and went and swore out a warrant, which she placed in Dick's hands to serve, advising him where he would most likely find him, viz.—at Doc Drew's saloon.

But the detective did not run across Dante that day, and the next day he came into possession of the cipher in a singular manner.

He was seated in the parlor at the Coleridge residence, waiting for Cora to come down from the sick room, when he espied a directed and stamped envelope lying on the floor.

Picking it up he discovered that it was unsealed, and moreover, there was no letter on the inside.

A glance at the superscription upon the envelope caused Deadwood Dick to utter a whistle of surprise. The address was as follows:

"MR. DOCKRILL DREW,

"No. — Lake street, City."

Here was a significant discovery, thought Dick. Who was there in the Coleridge Mansion in correspondence with Doc Drew?

Laying the envelope on the table, Dick returned to his seat, and was meditating over his "find," when a door opened, and Mrs. Coleridge entered.

She was a tall, middle-aged woman, large boned and angular, with a haughty cast of countenance, cold gray eyes, and a retrousse nose.

Her dress was of rich material, but could not be said to fit her particularly, nor become her either, even though she wore fine jewelry.

Seeing that Deadwood Dick was an occupant of the parlor, she bowed stiffly, and picking up the envelope from the table, withdrew.

"So ho!" Dick mused. "I've found out *who* is the correspondent of Doc Drew, the saloon-keeper. Humph! I wonder what this means? I'd like to know."

Cora soon came down-stairs, and Dick was informed that Mr. Coleridge was then stronger—one good sign at least.

The old gentleman had not been informed of the conspiracy against his life, for fear that the shock would kill him.

The cat, to which the greenish medicine had been given had died, so Cora announced, which, of course, confirmed all their suspicions.

Dick soon took his leave, saying that he should have some definite news to communicate ere long.

As he left the house, a district messenger boy ran up the steps, and rung the bell.

This aroused the detective's curiosity, and he lingered a few minutes in the neighborhood.

The messenger's summons was answered by Mrs. Coleridge, in person, who gave him a letter and some money. The boy then passed his watcher and proceeded in a direction that would take him to Lake street.

"He's going to Drew's," Dick decided, "and as I am heading that way too, I'll follow him. By Jove! I'd like to get a hold of that letter, for I mistrust the contents relate to the Coleridge conspiracy."

The opportunity came when he hardly expected it.

As he was dogging the messenger along one of the smaller streets, the lad encountered another boy of about his own size and age, who was likewise dressed in a regulation uniform of the service.

The boys stopped and eyed each other for a moment, exchanging some words which Dick was too far away to overhear.

The next instant they had attacked each other, and fought like young tigers, and almost at once down dropped the letter-books of both boys, and out of one fluttered an envelope.

Dick, now close at hand, did not hesitate, but picking up the envelope, hurried off. When several blocks away he entered a restaurant, ordered a lunch, and, while eating, opened the envelope—the same he had picked up in the Coleridge parlor—and spread out before him the following communication, written in figures:

"7-9-18-12 — 13-21-19-20 — 4-9-5 — 19-21-19-16-5-3-20-19. 4-1-14-20-5."

Dick studied this message long, and with great eagerness.

It was all "Greek" to him, but he inwardly vowed to solve the riddle if it took him all day.

So, ordering another cup of coffee, he proceeded with his inquisition.

"There are twenty-six letters in the alphabet," he reasoned, "and perhaps these figures each represent a letter. Now, let me see: 7 would be G; 9 would be I; 18 would be R, and 12 would be L. Total: G-I-R-L—girl. Good! By Jove, I'm right! Now to run out the rest!"

Patently he figured out the enigma, until he had produced the following result:

"Girl must die. Suspects. DANTE."

"There it is, all in a nutshell!" Dick muttered, triumphantly. "The girl must die. Suspects! What girl? Why, Cora Coleridge, of course! She has detected Dante's scheme. He has notified his confederates in this infamous plot. Consequently, this letter being for Doc Drew, he must be one of the confederates of Dante, who, I judge, is in the house. Mrs. Coleridge sent this, so she must be in the conspiracy! By blazes, I've struck a lead, and no time must be lost in developing it! I must be off for Doc Drew's saloon, and familiarize myself with it, and also with its *habitués*, in order to get at the true inwardness of this diabolical scheme."

And, having explained what it was necessary should be understood by the reader, and brought Deadwood forward to the time when we saw him, in our first chapter, in Drew's saloon, we will once more return to Chester Coleridge's sick-chamber, where his daughter had just finished reading the threatening letter of the anarchists.

"Oh, poor papa!" Cora said, feelingly, when she had finished the reading, "isn't it just too bad that such a letter should be sent to you, who have always been so good and indulgent to your employees?"

"It is a piece of base ungratefulness and rascality on the part of a certain few," the invalid groaned, "and is not participated in by the bulk of my employees. It comes from a few avaricious wretches who have no thrift themselves, and are envious of those who prosper. The attack is made because I am now sick, and unable to direct my own affairs."

"Would to God you were well, and able to be out again!" Cora said, fervently, as the tears sprang into her eyes. "Oh! papa, you will get well, won't you?"

"Alas! my poor child, I fear there is no hope, for even now the hand of death has its icy clutch upon me. I may linger on a few days—I hope and pray that I may, in order that this trouble may be settled—but I cannot survive long. Do not grieve, my child, for I am prepared to die, and when I do, it will be with the knowledge that I have left you well-provided for, and with friends who will look after your welfare."

"What friends?" Cora asked, incredulously. "I have but you as a relative. All others are but acquaintances."

"Why, don't you count Joseph June a friend?" Cora flushed scarlet.

"Well, y-e-s—after a fashion. He was in your employ, and I suppose he felt it was his duty to be courteous."

"No! no! my child; Joe June's feelings toward you are more than simple courtesy. He is an

honorable, upright man, as well as a thorough business man, and I am satisfied he is in love with you. Has he ever spoken to you on the subject of marriage?"

"No, not directly. I told him, once, that a friend of mine had just got married, and asked him if he ever expected to wed, to which he replied that he had never found any one who would have him. I suggested that I thought Dolly Drew would jump at the chance, as she was very fond of his society. To this he replied that he could not return the compliment, and there the matter dropped. I have heard since, however, that he is in love with Dolly."

"Nonsense!" retorted Mr. Coleridge. "Dolly Drew indeed! A rumseller's daughter! As if Joe June would stoop to that! Why didn't you let him know that you were not averse to his regard?"

"Why papa! That would have been unmaidenly!"

"Nonsense again!" snapped the invalid, with vim as if he had quite forgotten that he was so near the portals of death. "Women are so impractical! But never mind, child, Joe will be here this afternoon, and to see you and Joe engaged, before I die would greatly please me and ease my mind. Do you hear, Corinne?"

He only called her by her real Christian name when he was seriously in earnest!

"Yes, papa!" Cora replied, "and I will try to treat Mr. June as graciously as modesty will permit. More you cannot ask!"

"That's a good girl. Now, I am going to try and take a nap."

"But, papa, how about the anarchist letter?"

"Oh! don't bother your head about that. I'll have Joseph attend to the matter, when he comes. So call me if I am not awake," was the reply, when the sick man turned his face toward the wall while Cora stole down-stairs to the parlor, where to receive handsome Joe June, in case he called.

In truth, she did have a strong affection for the superintendent; but, as to giving him a hint to make him aware of the fact, it was the least of her intentions, for she would have considered that an act of extreme immodesty.

When Joe June called, that afternoon, they had a very pleasant interview, and he prolonged his call longer than was his custom.

He was a stalwart, good-looking man of six-and-twenty, with a kindly face, brown eyes, brown hair and mustache.

He was well educated, an interesting conversationalist whom intelligent people easily learn to respect and admire.

As June was about to go up-stairs, to see his employer, a servant entered and handed Cora a package, about the size of a "100" cigar box, which was wrapped in yellow paper.

"A present for Miss Cora! Messenger left it!" said the servant, and then withdrew.

"I do wonder what it is, and who sent it?" she queried as she began to unfasten the string!

Joe June had grown very pale. He reached forward and seized the package.

"You must not open it!" he cried. "How do you know but it is sent to destroy you? By my soul, I believe that package contains a bomb!"

CHAPTER IV.

DICK IN DURANCE—THE ANARCHIST'S DAUGHTER.

WE left the detective in an insensible condition, in the back-room of Doc Drew's saloon, surrounded by Drew, Isidor Plaque, Dore Dante, and several others of Drew's confederates.

From the effects of that terrible blow Dick remained insensible for a considerable time, and when consciousness at length did return it was to reveal the fact that he was lying upon his back in some dark place, that his hands and feet were not only bound, but that he was strapped down to the floor, and consequently unable to gain even a sitting posture.

For a long time he lay cogitating over the situation. What should he do—what could he do? was the question. With no confederate in this wrestle with rogues, he could not hope for help from any outside source, that was certain. If he was befriended it must be by some one who could be made aware of his condition, and who might, for a promise of reward, release him from that infernal hole, there was, therefore, but one thing to do: to so shout for help as to bring somebody to interview him—friend or foe.

And shout he did.

"Help! help! help!"

Then, he listened, but there was no answer, his voice evidently not having penetrated beyond the walls of his prison.

"Help! help!" he shouted again.

This time his appeal evidently was not in vain, for he soon heard a grating sound, as of a key turning in a rusty lock, and, a second later, a stream of light from a lamp, shone into the room.

This lamp was carried by a plainly clad young woman, some seventeen or eighteen years of age—a petite little maiden, with a pretty face and sunny hair.

She advanced hesitatingly and gazed down at the bound detective with startled curiosity.

"Who are you?" she questioned, "and what in the world are you doing here?"

"My name is Bristol," Dick replied, "and I was made a prisoner by Doc Drew and his gang after being assaulted and rendered insensible."

"Oh! you are the detective I heard papa speak of?"

"I am. Who are you, may I ask?"

"My name is Dolly Drew."

"Ah! you are the saloon-keeper's daughter, then?"

"No, I am his adopted daughter. He took me from the Foundling Asylum when I was an infant. I wish they'd left me there!"

"Why, may I ask?"

"Because, then I should have escaped the life of drudgery in the factory to add to Drew's gains. I am simply his slave."

"You work for Mr. Coleridge, eh?"

"Yes, in the shoe-factory."

Dick was silent for a moment.

The girl did not seem to be inclined to release him, and he presumed that such was not her intention.

"Would you mind telling me where I am?" he asked.

"Certainly not," was the reply. "You're in the sub-cellar under the saloon. There is another cellar still, under you."

"Yes? Well, what do these infernal anarchists intend to do with me?"

Dolly shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"If you had kept a quiet tongue in your head and not given your views of anarchy so pointedly, it is probable you would not be here now!" she answered. "Those who believe in revolution are yet sore over the hanging of Spies, Parsons, Engel and Fischer, and are ready to protect themselves at any cost. As to what is to be done with you, I know no better than yourself."

"I presume you are in sympathy with these men?" Dick observed, interrogatively.

Dolly gave him a singular glance, the meaning of which he could not interpret.

"Well, not entirely," she replied slowly, "for I do not believe either in the overthrow of the Government, nor in violence or murder to right even a great wrong. I do know that the working people, who have but small advantages of education, are kept down and treated as an inferior class, wholly subject to the rich and educated; I do see that the rich are made so by the incessant toil, small wages, great privation and debarment from the pleasures of life of the workers; and I do realize, how in their forlorn condition, it is utterly impossible for the workers to educate their children, who, like themselves, must therefore remain the slaves of toil—the mere serfs of the men of money."

The anarchist's daughter here paused, and Deadwood Dick gazed at her in positive astonishment.

"Your education don't seem to have been entirely neglected," he observed, admiringly.

"Not entirely; but I am proud to say that most of what I have learned has been by study and reading during the long hours of the night, after my hard day's work at the factory. Drew never knew of this, for he would have beaten me severely if he had. His wish evidently is to keep me ignorant."

"Why so?"

"Oh! I don't know. To grub for him, I suppose."

"Then, why do you stay with him?"

"Because he holds the secret of my life, which I hope some time to obtain. I am of good birth, and came of a good English family. My father and mother came to America, and shortly afterward died, and I was placed in an asylum. Soon after, Drew adopted me. Why, I do not know. There is something held back which, I presume, I will never know. Drew has even boasted of that, when he saw fit to tantalize me."

"Poor child, I sincerely sympathize with you," Dick said, feelingly; and, moreover, being a detective, it is but natural I should be deeply interested in what you have told me. This man Drew certainly is a villain of the deep-dyed order, and that he hopes to profit by

the possession of you is evident to me. Tell me—do you know the names of your parents?"

"No—that is, I only suspect. Once, when mischievously peeking into Drew's trunk, I discovered a queer little ebony barrel, hooped with gold. Upon the plate was the inscription: 'To Sir Jay and Lady Compton.' I thought nothing of this at the time; but, not long after this I found among a lot of old clothes, a baby-dress I had worn—at least I suppose so, for the Drews never had any children—when I was adopted. On this dress was marked, in india ink, the name 'Corinne Coleridge Compton.' I took a portion of the dress containing the name, and it has never left my possession since. I suppose I'm foolish, but, somehow, that bit of cloth, it seemed to me, would some day prove to me a souvenir of good luck!"

"Quite sensible of you," Dick said, thoughtfully, and trying to suppress the look of surprise which he knew was upon his face. "Without doubt you have an interesting history, which your foster-father is trying to keep from your knowledge. If I had the opportunity, I'd make something out of what you have told me, I am sure."

"You?" And she looked incredulous.

"Certainly. It wouldn't be the first time I've brought out developments that have restored people to their rights. That is my business—my calling. If I can get out of this hole, I am sure I can help you."

She looked at him inquiringly, then said turning as if to go: "you cannot possibly be of any help to me, and at present I am powerless to aid you, if I were so inclined. The only exit from this cellar is through the saloon, and it would be worth your life to try to run the gantlet."

"You are not inclined to help me?"

"I did not say that. I said it would be impossible for you to escape now!"

"Do I understand that there may be a future chance?"

"Possibly," the girl replied, thoughtfully. Then, she brightened up. "On conditions!" she added.

"Conditions, eh? Well, let's hear them!"

"There are three of them!"

"No matter, if there are a dozen. Go ahead."

"The one is, that, if you are given your liberty, you will quietly use your best efforts to find out all about my parents, and their antecedents!"

"Agreed to, without a demur!" Dick replied.

"You can depend upon it. My word is as good as my honor. The second—"

"Is that you will not seek to arrest Doc Drew until you have found out about my parents. After that, I care naught for him!"

"Granted again!" Dick agreed. "Now, then, for the third."

Dolly hesitated, and Dick could see that she bushed.

"Well," she said finally, "there is a young man whom I think a great deal of—ay, I might as well be plain: I love him, I idolize him! I would die to win him, as I would have others die, that he might be mine. There is another, richer and better looking than I, who seeks to win him. If I assist you to escape, I should want you to delicately intercede in my behalf, with the one I love."

Dick was silent a moment. Something he had heard in Drew's beerium, recurred to him.

"Well, I don't know," he said, reflectively. "Match-making ain't exactly in my line, and I don't know whether I would make much of a success or not. I think, however, I might. The object of your affection is Mr. Joseph June. Am I not right?"

Dolly started, and looked nonplused, the color mounting to her cheeks.

"How did you know?" she cried.

"I heard something to give me a pointer, in the saloon, up-stairs."

The girl looked uneasy.

"I don't thank 'em to be talking over my affairs in a public bar-room!" she said, angrily.

"Yet, they did so!" Dick replied, with a spice of triumph in his tone, "and, one fellow, in particular, insinuated that he would like to punch June's head for daring to see you home!"

Dolly's eyes fairly snapped with indignation. "Who was he—what was this man like?" she demanded.

"He looked to me like a Spaniard!"

"Isidor Plaque!" she exclaimed. I might have known it was either he or Dore Dante, for they are the only two who drive me nearly distracted with their protestations of love. Both know I will have nothing to do with them, but they will persist in forcing their attentions upon me!"

She walked abruptly to the door. When she reached it, she turned, and said:

"I can do nothing for you, now, and don't know when I can. I shall have to watch for my opportunity. I may be able to get you out of here in a day, or it may be a week; it depends considerably whether Drew succeeds in selling out, or not!"

"In selling out, eh?"

"Yes. He is anxious to sell out."

A sudden thought occurred to Dick.

"If I were at liberty!" he said, "I'd buy him out!"

Dolly laughed.

"You? Well, I guess not! Knowing you to be a detective, and a foe to anarchy, he'd burn the place to the ground before he'd sell to you."

"There's where you guess amiss. I would be so disguised, that he would not know who he was selling to!"

The girl reopened the door.

"One word, before you go!" Dick persisted.

"You are a pretty girl, and a sensible one. You acknowledge you passionately love Joe June, and yet you remain with the Drews, who are Joe June's worst enemy."

"How his worst enemy?"

"Oh! then you do not know of the plot of Drew, Plaque, and the anarchist gang?"

"I do not, nor do you!"

"You are mistaken. Drew and his confederates are bitter in their denunciation of June, and they propose to drive him from the superintendency of the Coleridge shoe factory, even if they have to resort to blowing him up. This much I know to be a fact!"

Dolly's eyes glittered dangerously, at this.

"Let them dare to offer to harm him, and I'll see them all to the gallows!"

She then left the room, and closed the door behind her.

Dick was once more left in inky darkness, but his good spirits had been restored by Dolly's visit.

"I think I've planted a thorn in soil where it will bear fruit!" he mused. "That girl is smart, and if anything is gained by setting me free, she'll do it!"

And Dick was pretty near right.

Dolly loved Joe June, and stood ready to fight for him, if need be, with her life!

CHAPTER V.

A LIFE PARTNERSHIP.

UNNECESSARY to say that Cora Coleridge was amazed at the startling suggestion of Joe June, and that she turned pale with apprehension.

"Oh, Mr. June!" she gasped; "quick! put the thing down—throw it out of the window—do something with it. Mercy! mercy! If it should explode. Oh, do put it down!"

Joe, who had been examining it carefully, looked up with a smile.

"Oh, do not be alarmed!" he said. "My guess may be only a false alarm. Although I have not removed the wrapping-paper, the package has all the appearances of being a ladies' work-box, or maybe it is a dressing-case. Do you not know of some one who might have made you such a present?"

"No, no; I don't know of a person in the world. Oh, do please put the awful thing down, Mr. June, if only for my sake!"

He gazed at her for an instant, as though her words had given him a revelation; then he placed the suspicious package on the floor, and said:

"For your sake, then, Miss Cora, I will comply with your request. For your sake I would do anything that was not criminal."

He took her hand in his, but she drew it quickly away, the color mounting to her temples.

"You misconstrue my meaning, Mr. June!" she stammered.

"Oh, did I? Well, I believed you were going to give me a chance to say something that I have wanted to say for a long time, but could not find the courage to say."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, Miss Cora. Can you not guess what it is?"

"I am not very good at guessing," Cora replied, keeping her gaze riveted upon the supposed infernal machine.

"Well, then, I will tell you, plainly and candidly, that I love you, and want you for my wife. This love is not a new or sudden outburst of passion, but the honest offering of my heart in exchange for your hand. My affection for you was born the first time I ever received a smile from your bright eyes; but, being an humble toiler, I dared not dream that you could ever be anything to me. Nevertheless, my love

grew constantly stronger. Patiently have I waited, without speaking, and striven to make myself worthy of you—in merit, if not in wealth. How I have succeeded, I leave you to judge. The time has arrived when I consider it not inappropriate to speak, for everything points to the fact that you will soon be left without a natural protector, and this, too, when there is menace toward your poor father's estate in the very air. You have shown me the threatening letter sent your father; before you, you see what I doubt not was sent to destroy you. There is trouble ahead, and you want some strong, clear-headed protector to shield you from the storm that is bound to burst after your father's death. Cora, will you accept my love, and let me become that protector?"

"What would Dolly Drew say if she knew of this?" was the evasive answer.

Joe June laughed lightly.

"Dolly Drew has not the least concern in this matter!" he declared.

"But I hear you have been paying her very lovely attentions."

"This is all nonsense. Miss Drew is a pleasant, good-hearted girl, but she is nothing more to me than the veriest stranger as far as love is concerned. I have but one love, and that belongs to you, to accept and make me happy, or reject, and make me the most miserable of men!"

"If I were to reject you, you'd change your feelings concerning Dolly Drew?"

"By no manner of means. I should simply wait upon your father and hand in my resignation as his business manager, and board the next outgoing train for the East!"

"You would do this?"

"I would, assuredly."

"But, why? Does your position not suit you?"

"It would not suit me to remain in your employ, knowing that I loved you and yet was nothing to you but an employee."

Cora arose, and putting her arm about his neck, looked smiling down into his upturned face.

"Then borrow no trouble for the future," she said, in a low, sweet voice, "for there will be no need of a change of management in the Coleridge Mills. That is my answer!"

Later, the lovers went up to Mr. Coleridge's room, and found the old gent awake and expectant.

When Joe and Cora entered, arm in arm, an expression of satisfaction dawned upon the invalid's face.

"Hal! what's this?" he exclaimed, his voice stronger and his manner more vigorous than any time since his illness. "Did she capture you, Joe, my boy?"

"Well, yes, in one sense she did, and in another sense, I captured her, you see. I told her that there was a possibility the factory would lose its present superintendent soon, and with true woman business tact she saw there might be some trouble in getting a man as well identified with the management as I; so we talked the matter over and came to an amicable understanding—that is to say, she made it an inducement for me to stay!"

"So you're engaged, hey?"

"That's about the state of affairs, sir."

"Then come hither, my children, and let the old man place his blessing upon your heads. God is wise, and doeth all things well. Bless you, my children, and may your path through life ever be a smooth and happy one. I am now content to die, knowing my little Corinne will be well protected and cared for. You will guard her carefully, my boy, and be kind to her?"

"I will. I will guard her as a priceless treasure."

"Yes, I know you will, my boy, I know you will. But you will have to be extra careful. There has been a terrible threat made against her. There are dark clouds hovering on the horizon, and when I am gone, I fear there will be dire trouble."

"Don't worry about that, sir. I shall take prompt measures to quell any trouble that may arise. I shall have these conspirators attended to at once, and I don't apprehend any serious trouble. As for my little wife, that is to be, she shall be neither troubled by business matters nor by enemies, so long as I live to guard her."

That night, just as the sun dipped into the gold-illuminated horizon, Chester Coleridge passed peacefully away into that sleep from which none awaketh here below.

CHAPTER VI.

DICK'S NEW CONFEDERATE.

AFTER the departure of Dolly, Dick, of course, had nothing to do but await developments.

His position was painful, and his back ached terribly. This, together with a craving appetite, made him decidedly uncomfortable. The only consolation he could get was in the belief that Dolly Drew would eventually come to his rescue.

Eventually!

"Lugubrious word," Dick muttered. "Christmas will come eventually, and so will the Fourth of July, but what are these festive occasions to a man tied on his back and hungry as a bear? The man who invented the word ought to be in my position for a day or two, and enjoy his invention."

While he lay deliberating, his mind recurred to what Dolly had said concerning her past.

"The girl has a history, that's evident, and no doubt she is the offspring of a wealthy English family, if she is, as she surmises, the daughter of Sir Jay and Lady Compton. The very fact that the dress she wore when taken from the foundlings' asylum, bore the name Corinne Coleridge Compton seems to prove her identity."

"Sir Jay and Lady Compton came to this country, were taken sick, and died. If they left an infant, naturally it was placed in a home. Doc Drew must have known the Comptons—who can tell? He may have been their servant, and adopted the infant for a speculative purpose, and has reared her to womanhood for a purpose. Very kind of you Mr. Drew. But, what object had you in view? One that was mercenary, I'll swear; and, moreover, I mean to know what it is, if I ever get out of this den."

"I don't think it will be an excessively hard job, either. Compton is a popular name among the English. Then, here is this middle name—Coleridge! Not by any means is that a common name. It is quite a singular coincidence that I should have undertaken a detective work for a lady named Corinne Coleridge, and, while in pursuit of my business, should run across a maiden whose real name appears to be Corinne Coleridge Compton. By Jove! if I ever get out of this fix, I will investigate the matter."

"Dolly is a nice-looking girl, but I'm afraid she will get left in her wish to get this Joe June for a husband, providing Joseph has a liking for Miss Coleridge, and the Coleridge ducats!"

The hours dragged wearily by, and to the imprisoned detective every minute seemed an hour. He grew excited, nervous, savage.

But, he had not much longer to wait. Just when he was beginning to get thoroughly disheartened he heard the key softly turn in the lock of the door, and, as it opened, Dolly Drew once more stepped into the room, lamp in hand.

She deposited the latter on the stool, and came close to Dick and looked down at him, searchingly. Evidently she had not decided what to say.

"I reckon you're tired of lying here?" she finally observed.

"You can bet I am!" Dick replied. "Have you come to set me free?"

"That depends. Did you promise to comply with the three conditions I named?"

"Certainly, I did."

"I believe you said, if you got your liberty you would buy out the saloon!"

"Yes, if the price was not too high!"

"What would be your object in buying out the saloon?"

"Oh! I should doubtless establish a friend in the business. Then, too, the less saloons these anarchists have the better they're off!"

"I agree with you there, and I've found out you were not lying to me!"

"Indeed? How do you mean?"

"You told me Drew and the gang meant mischief to Joe June!"

"Well?"

"You are right. They're planning to overthrow him from the superintendency of the factory. I played eavesdropper, and found that much out! You see, Mr. Coleridge died to-night, and after he's buried there's going to be trouble."

"Mr. Coleridge died to-night?" echoed Dick. "Why, what night is this?"

"Friday night!"

"I heard that he died Wednesday—the day I was assaulted in the saloon!"

"Oh! that was a false report."

"Then I've been here forty-eight hours?"

"About that. Now, Mr. Bristol, I am ready to work with you, for any one that means ill to

Joe June, he or she is my enemy. I'm in dead earnest now, and I'm goin' to frustrate Drew's plans all I can. So if you will promise to help me, and to protect Joe from danger, I'll set you free."

"I promise with all my heart!" Dick declared, heartily.

"Very well. I will take you at your word, but woe be to you if you fail to keep it!"

Dolly then drew a knife from her pocket, and severed the bonds. The next instant he was upon his feet, straightening his cramped limbs, and soon stood erect, as handsome and commanding as ever.

Extending his hand to his fair rescuer, he said:

"Miss Compton, allow me to extend to you my sincere thanks for this act, and rest assured that not only will I do all I can to further your desires, but I will make a thorough investigation of your antecedents."

"Then, you think you can learn something of myself and parents?" she asked, her hand still in his clasp.

"I do certainly."

"Do you really think that Sir Jay and Lady Compton were my parents?"

"That is my impression. How do you know the baby dress was worn by you, when Drew adopted you?"

"His wife once pulled it out of the rag-bag and showed it to me and told me so."

"Do you think you could get possession of the barrel-shaped casket?"

"I don't know. I can try."

"Very well. Do so. I will endeavor to buy the saloon to-morrow. If I succeed, you will have plenty of chance to communicate with me!"

"I have an idea he will sell out cheap!" the girl said. "He is sort of a ruling politician among the anarchists—an authority, as it were, and he scoops in a good many dollars in that way."

"If I catch him at any criminal mischief, I'll scoop him in!"

The girl made no reply, but turned and picked up the lamp.

"Come!" she said, "you'd better escape while there is a chance."

"All right. I'm ready. Lead on!"

They left the sub-cellar, and Dolly locked the door behind them. Then, they ascended a steep flight of stairs to the next cellar, and then another flight, which brought them into the saloon, which Dick found to be dark and deserted, and from the room Dolly ushered him into the street.

"Look out you don't get into another such a trap," she said, warningly. "Good-night."

"Good-night."

The door closed, and Dick hurried away through the early gloaming of the approaching morning.

"Free once more!" he breathed; "and, now, if I don't make it hot for these scoundrels I'll never attempt another job of detective work again. First of all I must see my employer, Miss Cora, and ascertain just what has happened since my incarceration."

CHAPTER VII.

A COUNCIL OF WAR.

OF course it was out of the question for Dick to think of visiting the home of the Coleridges until a seasonable hour, so he took himself to his hotel, only pausing by the way long enough to partially satisfy his hunger and thirst at an all-night restaurant.

Reaching his hotel he went to his room, took a bath, and brushed himself up.

This accomplished, it was broad daylight, so he went down to the reading-room, procured a morning paper, and glanced at it.

It contained only one item of news that particularly interested him, and this was the notice of Chester Coleridge's death.

It was but a brief paragraph, stating that the esteemed citizen had died the evening of the previous day, and that the funeral would take place to-morrow (Sunday), at his late residence.

"I don't know whether I had better call upon Miss Cora or not, until after the funeral?" Dick thought. "I ought to see her at once, it's true, but I'll hunt up Mr. Joseph June first, and then decide what is best to do."

After breakfast he made his way to the factory of which June was superintendent.

There he learned that work had been suspended until after the funeral of the late proprietor.

An employee of the establishment, however, directed the detective to June's boarding-place, but the superintendent was not found there, and

the landlady presumed that he "might be found at Mither Coleridge's, phat was dead."

So to the Coleridge residence the detective proceeded, not without misgivings, however, as to whether he would be favorably received or not.

By this time it was well on toward noon. On ringing the door-bell, a servant answered his summons, and recognizing him as a previous visitor, admitted him, and requested him to take a seat in the parlor, while she went for Miss Cora, for whom Dick at once inquired.

Entering the parlor, Dick found himself in the presence of Mrs. Coleridge, who was seated by a window.

Judging from appearances, Dick concluded that she was not grief-stricken over the recent demise of her husband.

She bowed rather stiffly, and bade Dick be seated.

"Whom did you wish to see?" she inquired.

"Miss Coleridge," Dick replied.

"Miss Coleridge is not to be seen," was the answer. "She is so overcome by her father's death that I have ordered her to keep to her room until the funeral takes place."

"Ordered her?" repeated Dick. "I should suppose Miss Coleridge was quite old enough to control her own actions. It is important that I should see her."

"You cannot see her!" the widow declared, her cold face flushing with anger. "She is too ill to see any one. I do not know who you are, or what is your mission, but your assurance is certainly amazing. You will confer a favor by taking your departure."

"Oh, I am in no particular hurry!" Dick replied, coolly. "Perhaps Miss Coleridge will sufficiently recover from her indisposition, in a few minutes, to receive me."

Madam Coleridge glared at him, in actual astonishment; then, a tigerish gleam entered her eyes.

"Good Heaven!" she gasped. "Am I to be wantonly insulted in my own house? We will see!"

She arose to leave the room, but was interrupted by the entrance of Cora, who, although her eyes were red with weeping, looked anything but really ill.

The moment she saw the detective, she advanced and extended her hand.

"Oh! is it you, Mr. Bristol? I have been wondering so much what had become of you," she said. "I suppose you have heard of poor papa's death?"

"Yes, and with deep regret. I saw the announcement of his death, for the first, this morning."

"Cora!" interposed Mrs. Coleridge, "who is this man?"

"Madam, he is a friend of mine," Cora replied, her eyes flashing.

"Indeed?" and the madam sneered. "Your choice of friends, I should say, is very vulgar. Moreover, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, receiving strangers when your father lies dead in the house!"

"Mrs. Coleridge!" retorted Cora, "you will please understand that I am mistress of this house, and am at liberty to receive whoever I like, without your approval or disapproval!"

"You had best not be too sure that you are mistress of this house!" the madam said, sneeringly, as she made her exit from the room, her face fairly livid with passion.

"I am sorry that I called," Dick said, when she was gone, "for I see I have caused a rupture between yourself and Mrs. Coleridge?"

"Oh, that's nothing," Cora replied. "You did perfectly right in calling, for I was anxious lest some harm had befallen you. As for my step-mother, it's no secret that she cordially hates me, and I can't say there is any love lost on my part, either. She married my poor father, simply in hopes of inheriting his fortune, but, I guess she has about given up hope of that, now, for the marriage was not a happy one, and I've heard papa say that her mercenary purpose would not be attained."

"I suppose, then, the bulk of your father's wealth has been left to you?"

"I presume so, although, I, of course, cannot say for certain, never having seen my father's last will."

"He left a will, then?"

"Yes. It was drawn up and signed, a few days ago—just before I sent to Police Headquarters for a detective!"

"Who drew up the will?"

"My father's lawyer, John Smith."

"Who were the witnesses?"

"My half-brother, Isidore Plaquet, and another young man who works in Mr. Smith's office."

"Humph! How comes it Plaquet was a witness?"

"He is studying law under Mr. Smith, and so the latter brought the two young men as witnesses, in case their services might be needed."

"Who has the will now?"

"The lawyer."

"So you think Mrs. Coleridge has given up all hope of succeeding to the fortune?"

"Yes. I have given her to understand that she would not get more than the legal dower."

"Indeed? Well, you are doomed to be completely deceived in the madam, Miss Cora. Not only does she intend to have her legal dower, but she expects to have the whole fortune, if she can get it. She, Dore Dante, Plaquet and Doc Drew have entered into a plot to wrest the whole inheritance from you, and if we don't look sharp they will succeed, too!"

Cora grew pale with apprehension.

"Good heavens!" she gasped. "Can this be true? Please explain what you mean!"

Dick did explain. He went on and related his adventures since he had seen her last, together with all he had learned that had a bearing on the case.

He had just finished when Joe June entered the room and was presented to the detective by Cora, as her affianced.

At her request Dick repeated his experience, to which June listened with keenest interest.

"By Jove! This matter must be sifted to the bottom, detective, and the guilty ones punished, regardless of person," June declared. "We're glad to have as good a man as you on the case. There's a plot of the kind you mention, beyond a doubt. Read this."

He then gave Dick the threatening letter which had been sent to Mr. Coleridge on the day of his death. This Dick perused with darkening brow.

"I am not particularly surprised," he said, "for it is scarcely more than I expected. This clique of villains, of which Mrs. Coleridge, Dante and Plaquet are the ruling spirits mean to have the Coleridge fortune, no matter what the cost, and Drew and a few of his cronies are associated in the conspiracy, stimulated no doubt by promises of a fat recompense for such services as they may be called upon to perform."

"That's it, exactly. And now, under such circumstances, what's to be done, detective? We look to you for advice. Shall we call the police into the matter?"

"By no means. That would make things all the worse—all the more dangerous, for you know the intense hatred of the anarchists for the police. No, what is done, must be done craftily and with keenest judgment. One thing is certain: Miss Cora must be guarded constantly. And not only that, but she must remain in the house, and no one admitted to see her except ourselves. No one else must be admitted to her presence, except her maid, who must be posted, and act as her constant attendant. Even Mrs. Coleridge must not be allowed to see her alone, or to enter her room."

"How long must this state of affairs exist?"

"That depends on circumstances. Before any positive move can be made, it will be necessary for me to collect such positive and overwhelming proof that a wholesale arrest can be made. This I hope to do by affiliating with the conspirators."

Dick was then shown the mysterious package that Cora had received the previous day, and which still lay upon the table, undisturbed.

"We suspect that it is an infernal machine," Joe June remarked, "and don't know what to do with it."

"Perhaps you are right," Dick replied. "The best thing to do with it is to put it away where no one can get at it, at present. If it is a bomb, it is no doubt so arranged that any attempt to open it would bring about an explosion."

"You are right. But wouldn't it be a good idea to turn it over to the police? Perhaps they could decide upon some method of finding out whether it is a dangerous thing or not."

"No objection to that. I will carry it to the chief of police myself, and he can take such action as he sees fit in the matter. And now, Miss Cora, you had better have a suite of rooms fixed up for your personal occupancy, and keep strictly to them for the present, for there's no over-estimating your peril. You have a waiting maid, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you trust her, implicitly?"

"Indeed I can! Annie and I are like sisters to one another."

"Very well. Have her personally superintend the preparation of your meals, and touch nothing that can possibly resolve itself into means of destruction."

"But, sir, I must attend poor papa's funeral!"

"Let the services take place here, with only the immediate household present. I must insist that you do not leave the house."

"But, I don't see what danger there would be of my going to the grave, as long as I went in a close conveyance," Cora persisted, her eyes filling with tears.

"There might be no danger, and again there might be. On the whole, it's best to be on the safe side. I suppose, Mr. June, that no notice has been sent the coroner of Mr. Coleridge's death."

"No. The doctor obviated the necessity of an inquest, by issuing a certificate of death, giving the cause as peritonitis. This was at Miss Cora's request, as she would not hear to a post-mortem examination."

"Perhaps it is just as well," Dick said, "as it saves a great deal of gossip, which is not specially desirable, just now. For extra precaution, Miss Cora, I will send a trusty detective from the Central Office, to whom you are to give the liberty of the house. He will not only be a protection to you, when Mr. June is not here, but will keep an observing eye on your step-mother, and see that nothing goes crooked."

"A good idea," June said, while Cora nodded her assent. "I shall feel much safer, then, you see!" she added, "for, somehow, since I have found out what a wicked creature Mrs. Coleridge is, I should not feel safe in remaining alone in the house, with her!"

"You need have no fears, you shameless minx!" cried Mrs. Coleridge, who, at this moment, burst into the room, attired for the street. "Since you have gathered around you such a circle of questionable men, I do not care to endanger my good name by remaining longer under this roof. Until my poor husband's estate is settled up, and I get my rights, I shall take up my quarters at the Palmer House, and you can have possession here."

"I shall have Chester's will probated at once, however, and then you will have to step down and out! Perhaps, then when you are turned upon the street, a pauper, your gentleman acquaintances will not be nearly so attentive!"

She turned, then, and swept toward the door, but Dick headed her off.

"Woman!" he said sternly—"for you are no lady to heap vile insults upon this innocent orphan—I will yet make you apologize to her, on bended knee. Remember! Now, go!"

The madam laughed, viciously, as she left the room, while the maiden fell unconscious in the strong arms of Joe June.

CHAPTER VIII.

DICK AS A DUTCHMAN.

DEADWOOD DICK remained at the Coleridge residence, until Cora was restored to consciousness; then he took his departure, carrying with him the mysterious package, which was suspected of being an infernal machine.

This he took direct to the chief of police, and made known to that official the main circumstances concerning its reception, but gave no names.

The chief promised to have an examination of the package made, to ascertain if there were any grounds for the suspicion; then Dick left.

"Now, then, for a disguise, and the saloon," he decided. "I must get at the inside working of this clique of conspirators."

He had plenty of disguises in his trunk at the hotel, and thither he at once repaired.

He well knew that in all probability his escape from the cellar would be discovered by the confederates ere long, if it had not already been ascertained, and he knew, also, that he would hardly be safe to walk the streets without being disguised, as spies would certainly be sent out in search of him.

So, he proceeded to make up in the shape of a beer-fat Teuton.

To touch up his face until it had a real large beer-cast, and add a yellowish mustache and wig of like hue, occupied but a few minutes. Then donning a big suit, he padded himself out until he was very broad shouldered, and possessed, apparently, a Gambrinus stomach.

His disguise was so complete, that his most intimate acquaintances would not have known him.

Satisfying himself that there was nothing lacking in his make-up, he left the hotel, and started for Doc Drew's resort.

When he reached the saloon, he saw the sign "For Sale" tacked upon the door.

Entering, he approached the bar, behind which Drew presided, in person.

"Ein lager!" Dick ordered, and it was promptly served in a stone mug.

Paying for it, and in doing so exposing to view a large roll of bills, he proceeded leisurely to quaff the beverage, while he gazed about the premises.

Only two men were in the room, besides him and Drew, and they were Schmidt and Steinmetz.

"You wants to sell oud dis blace?" Dick leisurely inquired, as he sipped his beer.

"Yes, I do!" Drew replied, promptly. "Do you know of any one who wants to buy a good business?"

"Vel, no, oexcept it vas myself. Vy for you wants to sell oud? You do not much pizness, eh?"

"I do a good business, but, this is a slack day. The most of my trade, you know, is in the evening. I make as much as thirty dollars a day out of this place!"

"Vy for you wants to sell, den?"

"For good reasons. I have made enough money to keep me; then, too, my daughter is soon to be married, and move to England, and it is my intention to go with her."

"Vel, dot is right. Always stick mit your daughter by, und you vas all right. I do der same. Vot you vant vor der blace? I pay not much, for I vas a sdranger in der neighborhood, und I haf to build oop my own cusdomers, you see."

"Well, that will not take long, if you know which side your bread is buttered on. You understand, this is a sort of hang-out for the laboring people who are in favor of revolution. I am an anarchist, and have all my friends come to see me. How are you fixed?"

"How vas I fixed? By Sherusalem, I vas yoost so pigger an anarchist as you vas, unt I am glad vot I met you. Led's haf something's to take."

"All right. You will drink with me, this time. The gentlemen, yonder, are a couple of friends of mine, Mr. Schmidt, and Mr. Steinmetz. Hey, gents, join us."

The two Germans were in no wise loth to accept such an invitation, and with alacrity arranged themselves alongside the bar.

"Mister Schmidt and Mister Steinmetz, this is a good loyal friend of mine—and perhaps, your future caterer. His name is—"

"Gotleib Van DerVeer—for short Got!" corrected Dick.

The three men in a low voice conferred together.

"Vel, mine poys, vot you get through mit yourselves?" Dick finally demanded.

"You are an anarchist?" Steinmetz asserted more positively than interrogatively.

"Yah!"

"You were sent here to see us?"

"Not in barticular. I vas passing, ven I see me dot der saloon vas for sale, und I shust stepped in to find out vot vas der brice."

"Very good. We are glad to meet you!" Steinmetz announced, "if, as you say, you are in sympathy with anarchy, and if you buy out Drew, we'll pledge you our support."

"That vas goot!" Dick declared. "Drink oop und ve will haf one on der new proprietor!" said Dick. "But holt on! I count me mine chickens, before dey be hatched mit dot egg out. How much you vil dake for dis blace, my goot friend, Misder Drew?"

Drew scratched his head, and reflected.

He did not want to make the price so great that there would be any danger of scaring his customer off; while, on the other hand, he did not want to name a price too low, so that Van Der Veer would question or doubt the value.

"Well, I'll tell you!" he said, finally. "In selling out the saloon, I only sell you the saloon itself. All of the up-stairs is rented, except a big front room, where our anarchist lodge holds its regular and all secret meetings. I also reserve the room in the rear of the saloon, for my own privacy. The saloon, as it stands, you can have for two hundred dollars, and if you don't want to go to the expense of having the licenses transferred, you can still let the saloon run in my name, and no one will be the wiser for it."

"All righd. I get me von bartender, and take possession to-night. Here is der money."

And taking the roll of bills from his pocket, Dick counted out the required sum, and handed it to Drew.

Thereupon Dick took Drew's place behind the bar. The stock of liquors and lager was small, but, that did not matter.

He remained at the saloon during the rest of the day, in the capacity of bartender, and at frequent intervals treated Drew and his brother anarchists, until they finally began to allow that Van Der Veer was a first class fellow.

"You ought to join our lodge, Van Der

Veer," Drew suggested. "It only costs a small sum, and will be the means of making you solid with our cause, and you will also increase your bar receipts."

"How many beoples you hab in dis lodge?"

"In the main lodge, some forty odd. In the secret lodge, where particular business is transacted, there are but six members, at present. It costs ten dollars to join the main lodge, and fifty to join the secret lodge. All members of the secret lodge will be presented with a badge, which will entitle them to the hospitality of any anarchist of note, throughout the country."

"All righd!" replied Dick. "You can yoost calculade on me for feefty tollars vorth. I go der whole hog or none."

"Very well. We hold a secret session, to-night at midnight, and you can then join."

Dick assented to this proposition, and "set 'em up," again.

Toward night he succeeded in hiring a sturdy young German as bartender, after which he left the saloon, ostensibly to order a new stock of liquors, but, in reality, to take a stroll, while he deliberated over what his course of action should be.

He was eager to attend the secret session of the anarchists, that night, but would it be best? Would it not be too dangerous?

Would they not put him through some sort of initiation, and thereby discover that he was disguised?

CHAPTER IX.

DICK SECURES AN ASSISTANT.

WHILE thus wandering along in deep meditation, Dick felt a touch on his arm, and looking around, found Dolly Drew at his side.

"Ha! did you penetrate my disguise?" he asked in surprise.

"I saw you come from the saloon," she replied, with an odd little laugh. "You do look awful funny in that rig. Did you buy the saloon?"

"Yes."

"For how much?"

"Two hundred."

"Then you're two hundred out of pocket."

"How do you make that out?"

"Because I have discovered, since I met you last, that the property is mortgaged, saloon, fixtures and everything, and the mortgage is long overdue. So, Drew has got your two hundred dollars, and eventually you will have to get out, or else pay up the mortgage."

"How much is the amount of the mortgage?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Who holds it?"

"Chester Coleridge did hold it. I suppose it will now fall into the possession of Cora Coleridge."

"Oh! then it will be all right. She would not press it against me, as I am in her emply, and we are on good terms."

"Oh! you're on good terms, eh? Seems to me that the pert miss is on good terms with all young men!"

"Well, I can't say as to that. She is pretty, unconventional and entertaining, and if, as you say, she is popular with the young men, perhaps that is the secret of her popularity."

"Humph! There are are plenty of other girls as good-looking and accomplished as Cora Coleridge!" Dolly said, almost resentfully, and in a tone which caused Dick to gaze at her inquiringly.

"Don't you think I am as good-looking as she is?" she added.

"Well, really, I would rather you had not put such a question, for it is an embarrassing one," Dick replied candidly. "However, since you evidently expect an answer, I will say, that, as far as my judgment of feminine beauty goes, you are quite as pretty as Miss Coleridge."

"Thank you!" Dolly returned; then abruptly changed the subject:

"Did you see Joe June?"

"Yes."

"What do you think of him?"

"Why, he seems to be a nice sort of fellow."

"Did you mention me to him?"

"No. I had no opportunity, as I met him in the presence of another."

"Cora Coleridge?" she asked quickly.

"Yes. He was at the Coleridge house, assisting in the arrangements for the funeral."

"A task by no means unpleasant to him, I presume," Dolly replied, sarcastically. "But, what matters it? All men are fickle, are they not, Mr. Bristol?"

"Oh! no, I guess not," Dick replied. "There are good and bad sheep in every flock, you know."

"Probably. Well, maybe I've been a fool

for liking Joe June when he aspired to win a girl of higher position than I; but, one thing is as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow!"

"What is that?"

"Joe June shall never marry Cora Coleridge!" And her bosom heaved with emotion.

During this conversation, she had continued to walk along by Dick's side.

"I am sorry to hear you say that, Miss Dolly," he ventured to say. It could not benefit you to do injury to either June, or Miss Coleridge, you know. I will be plain with you. I believe that a match is already made between them, and it would be both futile and imprudent on your part, to try and break it. If June loves Miss Coleridge, he certainly does not love you, and you are, as it were, wasting your affection on a stone. If there is nothing in particular between him and Miss Coleridge, then, by patience and the exercise of womanly judgment, you may by biding your time, win him. Certain it is, that your cause would not be benefited by an act of indiscretion."

She had listened to him, attentively, the color deepening in her cheeks.

"You are right!" she said, when he ceased speaking. "I have been a fool to cherish animosity toward Cora Coleridge. I will watch and wait, and bide my time, as you say. If I were to injure her, it would only injure me in his estimation."

"You are right. You can do far better, by assisting me to shield him from the danger that menaces him, and thereby gain a firmer hold on his good opinion of you."

"True! true!" she replied, thoughtfully. "Your counsel is good, and I am deeply grateful to you, for it. Perhaps I may outgrow my infatuation for Joe June, if I find he does not love me as a true lover should."

"Exactly. Now to change the subject: How did you come to find out about this mortgage?"

"I overheard Drew and Steinmetz talking the matter over."

Dick then related the circumstances of his purchase of the saloon, including the invitation that had been extended to him to join the anarchists' secret lodge.

"You'd better not join them," Dolly warned, "unless you want to get into trouble. You would have to be initiated, and they would surely discover your identity, and then your chances would be slim, I can tell you."

"You think they have not discovered my escape from the cellar, then?"

"On the contrary, they have discovered your escape, and I am accused of assisting you to escape. That's why you see me on the street!"

"Ah! is that so? You don't mean to tell me that Drew has turned you out of doors!"

"No! He didn't get the chance. When he accused me, we had some sharp words, and he struck me. Then I told him he could consider me his mortal enemy in the future, and left the place. I have no money or place to go, but I'll try to get along somehow until the factory starts up again; then I'll be all right!"

"Well, I'll guarantee you'll not want for money while I'm around! Here, take this!"—thrusting a ten-dollar note into her hand. "All I ask in return, is that you assist me to defeat the schemes of these anarchists; it is simply pay for services to be rendered."

"Oh! Mr. Bristol, you are too kind. I do not feel that I ought to take this money."

"Pshaw! Accept it, of course, and say no more about it. I really owe you even more than that for helping me out of that pit of darkness, and I do want you to help me to-night!"

There was perceptible moisture in Dolly's eyes as she extended her hand.

"Believe me, if there is anything I can do to assist you in your good work, you can command me," she declared.

If Dick felt surprise at this answer, he did not betray it.

Yet he did so feel.

Here was a girl—woman, bred in a very rough society, uneducated, yet a person of real refinement and correct principle.

Dick could but admire her and feel a deep interest in her fortunes.

"My intentions are," he said, as they walked along, "to prevent a premeditated crime—one which I am sure you, in your own heart, though reared among anarchists, as you have been, would shrink from. The conspiracy against the Coleridge estate, by these professed anarchists, is that which I have to fight. It is to put Madam Coleridge in position and control of the estate, to cast Cora out penniless and to drive Joe

out of all power. The conspirators are Isidor Plaquet, Dore Dante, Madam Coleridge and Doc Drew. The other anarchists, so far as the Lake street place is concerned, are mainly tools to do the work for the others. See?"

"Yes, I comprehend," she replied.

They walked on.

"Chester Coleridge has left a will, as I have been informed," Dick went on, "but I am led to think that a trumped-up will is to be substituted, to cheat the rightful heiress!"

"What a shame!" Dolly said, thoughtfully, her old antipathy for Cora apparently gone. "I could cry for her in her trouble, as much as I have hated her before. And Joe—"

"This clique of villains," went on Dick, "in order to acquire the estate, must needs be rid of Cora first, then Joe—for Joe would fight the battle out for Mr. Coleridge's sake, if it took a leg, or even two."

"For Cora's sake," corrected Dolly.

"Even so. He believes in 'Right is Right.' Don't you?"

"There are two sides to that question," she answered, evasively. "I might be a poor working-girl, but I think my industry and service ought to receive better pay than it has received."

For a moment Dick felt lost; he hardly expected this kind of a retort.

"Do you think Plaquet is such a bad fellow? Don't you think that the others are rather taking him for—well, to use a vulgar term, a sucker? That is to say, are they not using him to forward their own schemes, and yet eventually will drop him altogether?"

A few seconds elapsed, without a word uttered by either; then the girl answered:

"You have brought me some new ideas," she said, in a slow, thoughtful manner. "I really do not believe Isidor to be wickedly bad. He is a harum-scarum fellow, fond of dress, of gambling, and so has run into dissipation, but at heart he is not depraved."

"In his acquaintance with the Dante-Drew gang, he has acquired most of his bad habits, I infer."

"Yes; he is one of Doc's debtors, but is never troubled. Drew has that power over him, at least."

"I see!" thought Dick. "This plot is not of recent conception. It is a deep-laid scheme. Plaquet is studying law with one John Smith. Smith has been counsel for Mr. Coleridge, and drew up Coleridge's will, of which Isidor Plaquet was a witness. I was not wrong in my guess. Isidor is being inveigled into the rogues' net, under the promises of a big reward. I must not lose track of him, that is certain."

Abruptly he said:

"Where does Plaquet live, Miss Dolly?"

"I don't know. He works for John Smith, the lawyer—that is, he is studying law with him, and—why, when I come to think of it, he has to-day been admitted to the bar. He told me so this morning. Beginning Monday, he will be Mr. Smith's partner."

"Good for Plaquet," Dick said, heartily. "I knew there was some good stuff in the fellow, and if he is really a lawyer, a useful future may be in store for him."

"Do you think so?" Dolly inquired interestedly. "I shouldn't think you would admire him much, when he was one of the gang which caused your imprisonment in the cellar!"

"Oh, I understand the man better than you," Dick said, positively. "He was compelled, I think, to act with them, then, to avoid their suspicion. He is to-day an anarchist, to-morrow, he might be the reverse!"

Dolly laughed, and at the same time took the detective's arm, for it was now growing dark, and the street was crowded.

"It would be hard to make me believe that!" she said.

"Love will surmount many barriers."

"Love?" in surprise.

"Yes. Is not Isidor in love with you? And could you not, by womanly ways and interest, lead him from his wild habits, if such he has, and direct him by the course that leads to honor, duty and the exercise of his talents? I think you could."

Dolly looked at the detective in amazement. Such a view of her influence or power was something entirely novel and new to her.

"Isidor is not innately bad, I am convinced," Dick went on. "Now, suppose he was made to assert his true manhood and to become a good and influential citizen by being a good lawyer? Would it not be a nice thing to have such a man for a lover? If I were a girl, I would choose a professional man, in preference to a man without a trade or profession."

"Is detective business a profession?" Dolly inquired, coyly.

"Well, perhaps. But, you see, a profession of that kind, may be classed among the most uncertain of all callings," Dick replied, with a smile.

"But, now, to lay all joking aside, will you, —can you assist me to-night?"

"How? If I can, rest assured I will do all in my power."

"There will be a secret meeting of six of the anarchists, to-night, at midnight."

"Probably! Saturday night is generally the time the leaders meet, I believe."

"Well, I shall leave my bartender in full charge, with orders to close up at the usual hour. What is that hour, as regards Drew's place?"

"Twelve o'clock."

"I suppose the saloon is then cleared?"

"Drew and the other five leave the bar-room about ten minutes before twelve, and go to the second-story front room, where the secret session, as they call it, is held."

"Have you ever been present at one of these sessions?"

"Of course not."

"Have you never overheard what transpired during one of them?"

"I never bothered my head to listen," Dolly replied, evasively.

"Well, what I want is this," Dick said. "I shall excuse myself from joining the lodge to-night, on the plea that my presence is required elsewhere. But I want to hear what transpires between the secret six. Is there a way whereby I can do so?"

Dolly reflected a moment as they walked on.

"There is," she at length answered. "There is a small room at one side of this room where the men meet. There is a glass door communicating from one room to the other, and in one of the panes a hole is broken, so that by stationing yourself in this small room you can both see and overhear all that is said and done in the big room."

"Ah! But how is one to reach this small room?"

"Leave that to me," Dolly replied. "I know how to reach it, for, unbeknown to Drew, I have a key to the lock of every door in the house. All you have to do is to meet the bartender, after he closes the saloon, and get the key to the saloon-door; the rest will be easy. Drew has a key to the door of the hall that leads to the assembly-room, and that is the way they make their exit."

"Then you, too, would like to hear what transpires to-night?"

And Dick eyed her sharply as he put the question.

"I would," she replied. "If they mean any harm to Joe June, I want to know it, so as to thwart them!"

"Very well. It will be well, perhaps, for both of us to overhear their schemes. You will be in the vicinity of the saloon to-night?"

"Yes, if I am not molested by the roughs who frequent that neighborhood."

"At midnight, then, I will look for you."

"I will keep out of the neighborhood until nearly twelve o'clock, and then you will find me in a hallway directly across the street."

They separated, Dolly going in search of lodgings, while Dick made his way back toward Doc Drew's saloon.

He must needs make an excuse for not joining the anarchists that night.

CHAPTER X.

THE MIDNIGHT COUNCIL.

WHEN Deadwood Dick reached the saloon, after his talk with Dolly Drew, he found only his bartender and Doc Drew present, and the latter about half-asleep, for he had imbibed more liquor than usual that day, and was now under its influence.

He looked up and nodded drowsily, as the new proprietor entered.

"Well, did you find what you wanted?" he demanded, gruffly.

"I finds more as I 'spected," Dick replied, grimly. "I finds out you haf no right to sell me this place, as dere pe a pig mortgage mit it all, und dat Meester Coleridge helt dis mortgage. So you mus' gif back to me t'e money I paid mit you!"

"Well, I reckon not!" Drew replied, with a sneer. "You needn't fret yourself about the mortgage, for I shall take it up as soon as I find out who Chet Coleridge's executors are."

"Nix! I don't run mine head in such risks as dot, Meester Drew! I wants my moneys pack, I dells you!"

"Well, you can't have it, and that settles it."

I've sold out, fair and square, and nothing remains for me to do but to pay off the mortgage, when a settlement of the Coleridge estate takes place. So if that don't satisfy you, you'll have to do the next best thing, whatever that may be."

For a moment Dick was tempted to give the rascal a good pounding; but, on second thought, he considered it would be better to bide his time, and not create any disturbance, until he was further prepared to cope with it; so he turned away, with a shrug of the shoulders, and ordering the bartender to close up at twelve o'clock, as he should not be back again that night, he once more left the saloon.

After a few inquiries he found his way to the law office of John Smith, counselor for the Coleridge estate, but the lawyer was not in, nor were his clerks.

The office was closed, and upon the door-knob was a strip of crape.

"Somebody must be dead in the lawyer's family," Dick mused. "I wonder who it could be!"

There was a confectionery store next door, and hither the detective went for information.

"Oh! it's Mr. Smith himself who is dead," said the young lady clerk. "He was knocked down by a runaway team this afternoon, and received fatal injuries which terminated in his death, about two hours ago."

"Indeed! Where did dis Meester Smit reside?"

"At some one of the up-town hotels. He died at the — Street Hospital."

"Vas he not a marriert man, mit a wife?"

"Oh, no! He was a widower. His wife died several years ago."

Thanking his informant, Dick took his departure.

"This is bad," he mused. "Smith could not have selected a worse time to shuffle off this mortal coil. His demise will give Mrs. Coleridge and her colleagues fresh courage and power. If Isidor Plaquet should succeed to Smith's business, it would be an easy matter for him to substitute a forged will if he is bound to see the conspiracy through. I must look into this matter."

The hour was so late that Dick concluded not to visit the hospital that night, as it was more than likely he would be refused admittance; so, as he had nothing else to do, he dropped into one of the theaters, to witness the closing act of a performance, and when it was over he made his way back into Lake street, as it was not far from midnight.

When he came opposite his saloon, he was met by Dolly, who stood in the shadowy doorway.

"You are just in time," she said. "We must take up our position in the small room before the secret six enter the larger room. It is very close upon twelve o'clock, so come along."

They at once crossed the street.

Between the saloon and the adjoining house, was a dark covered alleyway leading to the area, which proved to be a small walled-in court-yard. From this yard, an open staircase led up to a second-story rear door of the saloon building.

Cautioning Dick to make as little noise as possible, Dolly led the way up the stairs, and inserting a key in the lock of the door, opened it. Then they entered a narrow hall, and the door was closed behind them, leaving them in darkness.

"Now, then, while I light a lamp, you take off your heavy boots," Dolly directed.

"Won't a light be risky?" queried Dick. "If we are discovered there'll be trouble."

"Perhaps you're right. Pull off your boots, and give me your hand, and I guess I can lead the way all right."

Dick accordingly removed the "stogies" he had adopted to comport with the rest of his costume, and then, taking him by the hand, Dolly groped her way along the uncarpeted hall, to a door, which the girl opened, and both entered a little room having one window, which looked out upon the street, and the electric light below in a measure dispelled the darkness.

Besides the door from the hall there was another, containing two stained glass panels, one of which had a piece broken out, about the size of a silver dollar. This door opened into the assembly room of the anarchists. Closing and locking the hall door, Dolly brought forward two stools, and placed them by the glass door, and she and Deadwood Dick sat down!

"We can both see and hear," she said. "It is time they came up-stairs. Yes, there they come, now."

Footsteps were heard, and quickly the stained windows showed that there was a light in the next room.

Applying his eyes to the aperture in the glass, Dick eagerly scanned as much of the next room as he was able.

Just opposite his position, in the middle of the room, was a long table, surrounded by wooden chairs, and here six persons seated themselves, all on one side, and facing the spy, over which he felt elated, as he was thus enabled to study their faces.

Beginning at the right, sat Dore Dante; then Mrs. Chester Coleridge, Doc Drew, Jacob Steinmetz and Simon Schmidt.

"Only five of them," Dick whispered, to Dolly. She took a look through the aperture, and nodded.

"Plaquet is missing," she said. "He'll be here soon, very likely."

She was right, for Plaquet soon entered, and took his seat at the table.

"Well, let's proceed to business," Madam Coleridge said. "At this meeting, we must form decisive plans of action, which must be carried into execution, without delay. To-morrow, Chester Coleridge will be laid away to rest, and that ends all trouble with him! and on Monday, if I am not greatly mistaken, Cora will marry Joe June!"

At this, Dore Dante smote the table with his fist, and his eye gleamed, greenish.

"I'll stop any such alliance with a bullet, if I hang for it, the next minute!"

The madam laughed sarcastically.

"That's what you have been preaching for days past, but June stalks about unharmed!"

"Because I have had to be careful. Since that accursed detective threw me out of Coleridge's, I've had to lay low. But, never fear. If you keep your contract with me, you'll not find me wanting."

"I shall keep my contract with all of you, providing you keep your promises and help me to attain the position and property!" was the reply. "Has any one seen the detective to-night?"

There was a negative shake of the head.

"I would like to get a chance to lay him out!" Dante said bitterly. "If he ain't put out of the way he will be the means of getting us all into trouble."

"Yes. He took the bomb to the chief of police. If they find out what is, we are all liable to arrest."

"Pooh!" sneered Doc Drew, with a shrug of the shoulders. "How are they going to prove that we had anything to do with sending it? Our united denial would go a mighty sight further than the testimony of one man, be he even a detective, won't it?"

"Of course it will," assented Dante.

"But you forget that a charge of poisoning can be brought against you, Mr. Dante!" Plaquet said, significantly.

"There's no particular danger of that, Mrs. Coleridge at once assured, "for there will be no post-mortem examination—the doctor, at Cora's request, having issued a certificate of death. So far as Chester's death is concerned, nothing is to be feared. It is the disposal, next, of Cora, Joe June and this meddlesome detective, that must next occupy our attention."

"I shall certainly insist that no harm be done to Cora Coleridge!" declared Isidor Plaquet, promptly.

"You shall *insist*?" echoed the madam, sharply, her cold gray eyes snapping with anger, while the others glared at the young lawyer in surprise. "And who are you, pray, to have the audacity to offer interference with our plans?"

"I have the more or less honor of calling myself your son, I believe," Plaquet retorted.

"Then so much the bigger idiot you are for daring to suppose we would brook any interference from you! I am astonished!"

"Oh! I've known all along he'd turn out a traitor!" sneered Dore Dante.

Plaquet turned upon the speaker, fiercely.

"You're a lying scoundrel!" he cried, "and if you don't retract those words, you'll be called upon to meet me at the pistol's point!"

"I retract nothing!" Dante replied, doggedly, "and if you want to fight, name the time and place, and I'm your man. We're rivals for Cora Coleridge's hand, anyhow, and I'd as soon kill you as look at you!"

"Very well. My second will wait upon you to-morrow, with a formal challenge. As for Cora Coleridge, no harm shall come to her; and not because I have matrimonial intentions in that direction, for I have not. There's another I like far better."

Then turning to Mrs. Coleridge, Plaquet continued:

"You have no need to be astonished, madam.

I said no harm should come to Cora Coleridge, because there is no need for harming her."

"And why not?" demanded the madam, her fingers working nervously. "Isn't the girl in my way of getting the fortune?"

"Not necessarily so."

"Then explain yourself. If bloodshed can be avoided, while at the same time the fortune comes into my possession, I want to know how it is to be done."

"Well, I suppose you know I have been admitted to the bar?"

"Yes."

"And made a partner of John Smith?"

"Yes."

"Well, John Smith is dead!"

"Dead?" echoed the other conspirators. "Dead?"

"Yes. He was run over by a runaway team of horses to-day."

"And killed, eh?"

"Not instantly. I saw the accident, and had him conveyed to the hospital. The injuries he sustained were internal, and he only lived four hours after reaching the hospital."

"Well? What else?"

"Oh, not much, except that Smith exercised his power of attorney, authorizing me to transact such of his unfinished legal business as I could attend to, and directed that I should look after the Coleridge estate and will, first of all. So you see, it remains with me to say who shall inherit the estate of Mrs. Coleridge. See the point?"

There was a momentary silence, during which Isidor's audience eyed him partly in hope and partly in doubt.

Doc Drew was first to speak.

"Well, ef that don't beat the Dutch!" he ejaculated.

"It certainly is a welcome happening," Mrs. Coleridge assented. "Of course Isidor will now help me to the fortune, and the road is clear."

"Don't be too sure of that!" Isidor returned. "If I wish, you can handle Chester Coleridge's shekels. If I don't wish, you can't. I've got the game all in my own hands, and you must deal with me. There are two conditions to be fulfilled, before you can hope to corral the fortune. You must make good the one condition, and Doc Drew must make good the other!"

CHAPTER XI.

MORE REVELATIONS.

In the little room, Dick and Dolly had of course listened to all this conversation, with keenest interest.

"Plaquet means *you*!" Dick had whispered, when the lawyer declared that he loved another than Cora Coleridge.

Dolly had smiled faintly, but made no answer.

When Plaquet announced that there were two conditions by which only his scheming mother could attain the Coleridge estate, the two spies listened eagerly, to catch the announcement—to learn the conditions.

There was a brief silence in the assembly at Plaquet's decision; then Mrs. Coleridge's sharp tones were again heard:

"So you have been playing a game of your own, have you?" she said, vindictively. "Dore Dante was right! You are a traitor, and as such you should be treated. You think to bleed us by blackmail, I suppose, before you help us. What a good confederate you are, to be sure! But, if you think to make fools of us, you'll find out your mistake."

"Yes," growled Drew, "you'll find out your mistake, in a way you won't like, too!"

To this Dante, Schmidt and Steinmetz assented, with grunts of displeasure.

"Oh! I'm not afraid of you in the slightest, whatever threats you make!" Plaquet retorted coolly. "The safe of my late partner contains Coleridge's will, and another will, the exact copy of the original, except that the name of the legatee is absent. The space thus left unfilled, would just accommodate the name of Jane Coleridge. But, there are conditions which Jane Coleridge and Doc Drew must agree to, before the name is inserted, and the original destroyed. If these conditions are not accepted, Cora Coleridge, on her marriage to Joseph June, will have her father's fortune in its entirety and I will see to it that it is so."

"It shall never be!" hissed madam, growing white with passion.

"Leave it to me; I'll attend to June!" cried Dante.

"Bah! kill this traitor, *here*!" exclaimed Drew, with savage emphasis.

"You dare not kill me!" was Plaquet's defiant challenge, "for my death would be the means

of implicating every one of you in *two* murders. But, I fear neither one nor all of you, I am armed, and am a dead shot. The further fact that keeping company with the two wills, in my late partner's safe, is a full expose of all your plots, which in case of my sudden death, goes to the chief of police—this gentle fact, I think, will show you how highly necessary it is that I should live. This message to the chief of police would prove intensely interesting to him," and the speaker laughed tantalizingly.

Madam Coleridge gave vent to her evil temper.

"Curse you! curse you!" she half-sobbed. "To think that a son of mine should turn upon me in such a manner! Name your conditions, you wretch!"

"Softly! softly! mother dear!" warned Isidor. "Do not be imprudent enough to anger me, or you may regret it. All I want is to do business in a business-like way. While I am not a villain, and would shrink from wanton crime, I am like every one else, I want to get a good start in the world."

"I am now very poor, but have a hope of making out well in the profession I have adopted. But, I cannot expect to make such a living as I must have for some time to come; I must have money."

"You offered me five hundred dollars if I would so manipulate the will that *you* would inherit the Coleridge estate; but such a sum is no compensation for such a service, as you all know."

"Here are terms, and I won't deviate from them one iota. My price for making you heiress to the Coleridge fortune is five thousand dollars, instead of five hundred. Half of the amount must be paid in advance at once. The other half you are to pay me after the reading of the will that settles the estate upon you. In consideration of the acceptance of this condition, and providing Doc Drew also accepts the one I shall impose upon *him*, I will then agree to do as follows, to-wit:

"On Monday, after Chester Coleridge's funeral, you and Cora Coleridge will receive legal citations to appear before me personally, and immediately, to listen to the reading of the Coleridge will. This summons will be perfectly legal and above board, as I am empowered to transact my late partner's business; and furthermore, your husband's will stipulates that the will shall be opened and read within three days after his demise. See?"

"Go on!" madam hissed, the muscles of her face working strangely. Seemingly greed, fear and defiance were having a struggle for the mastery.

"Well, I will then read the substituted will, and by *its* terms you are to pay Cora Coleridge, in money, within one year, the net sum of twenty thousand dollars—less than one-fifth of the real value of the estate, as you are aware. Twenty-five hundred of my five thousand must be paid before I send you the citation. To prevent your cheating me out of the other twenty-five, you are bound by the terms of the will to pay me that sum."

"You appear to have everything cut and dried to suit yourself!" sneered Mrs. Coleridge.

"Exactly! I've got the whip hand, and I intend to use it. You might as well capitulate, for you can gain nothing by a fight with me."

"Your terms are utterly out of the question. I haven't twenty-five hundred dollars in the world."

"Oh, you can raise it! A woman who boasts of a fortune in diamonds is never at a loss to raise so trifling an amount. You can have until Monday morning to make the payment, providing you promise me it shall then be forthcoming."

"But, you mentioned another condition," was the reply.

"Oh, that applies to Doc Drew! You must use your influence, and if necessary, pay him to give up that which no longer belongs to him!"

"What do you mean?" quickly demanded Drew.

"I refer to the bonds!"

"Bonds?" ejaculated the villain, in feigned amazement. "I don't know what you mean."

"You're a hypocritical villain—a thorough old scoundrel, and a liar!" Plaquet retorted, "and, more's the pity you weren't hung long ago. You don't know anything about bonds, eh, when for nigh sixteen years you've been living off the interest from them."

"I'll try and refresh your memory. About a year ago, you will remember, I fell in love with Dolly, whom you call your daughter. That was before she turned her affections over to Joe June. Seeing that my suit was not appre-

ciated, I virtually withdrew it, although my true feelings underwent no change.

"It was while I was keeping company with Dolly that she told me what she knew of her past, and she then expressed her belief that she was the daughter of people in a higher station of life than the Drews. I quite concurred with her opinion, and making note of what she had told me, set to work to look up the matter. I worked long and earnestly, in the hope that, if I succeeded in establishing her identity, she would look more favorably upon me.

"Well, the result of my investigation was as follows:

"A matter of seventeen years ago, a titled Englishman, Sir Jay Compton by name, came to America, accompanied by his wife, Lady Compton, his two-year old daughter, Corinne Coleridge Compton, and a man-servant named Dockrell Drew.

"Before leaving England Sir Jay disposed of his ancestral estate, for ten thousand pounds, and on arrival in America, invested the amount in forty-year six per cent. railroad bonds—at least so he wrote back to a friend in England, a copy of which letter I secured.

"Not long after arriving in America, Sir Jay and wife and daughter came to Chicago, leaving Drew in New York, to follow later.

"Her ladyship wanted to find her brother, Chester Coleridge, who was a prosperous business man, and whom she had not seen for years.

"Before the train quite reached here, however, Sir Jay and wife were both stricken with fever, and on arrival in this city, were taken to a hospital, where they died within a very few hours.

"Corinne was sent to a foundling home.

"Soon after Drew came to Chicago, got possession of the Compton effects, and, by producing a document vesting him with power as guardian of Corinne, in the case of the death of Sir Jay and Lady Compton, and with power to draw the annual interest on the bonds, for the purpose of supporting and educating Corinne, assumed charge of the child and the funds. This document of course was a barefaced forgery; but who was there to contradict its authenticity? Surely, not little two-year-old Corinne.

"Ah! Doc Drew, you see I know you like a book, and have got hard down onto your game. What a picnic you have had, to be sure. No wonder you were willing to act as Corinne's guardian, when you drew a yearly stipend of three thousand dollars, interest on the bonds, now for over sixteen years. Whew! forty-eight thousand dollars—nearly the amount of Sir Jay's original investment!"

Doc Drew's face, as the speaker progressed, had grown dark with rage.

"Well, what of it? It's none of your cursed business!" he growled. "I took the girl out of the asylum, and brought her up, and of course I was entitled to pay for it."

"You brought her up, eh? How did you bring her up? You made her drudge for you, almost from childhood. Did you educate her?—yes, in a mill! You kept her, so far as in your power, from books and learning. But your power over her is at an end. The girl is over eighteen, and her own mistress. Therefore, in the name of the law, I demand the bonds."

Doc Drew laughed hoarsely.

"Well, you'll not get them from me," he declared. "I told you to-night that the girl and I had a flare-up, and she cleared out, stole the bonds, and took 'em with her."

"You lie, you scoundrel! She did not know of the existence of the bonds."

"So I thought, but I got fooled. When she was gone I went to get 'em, so as to put 'em in a safe place, but they were gone. Of course she pinched 'em, for no one unfamiliar with the house could have found them if they had searched for 'em a year."

Isidor Plaquet arose from the table with an impatient gesture.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I wouldn't believe you under oath. But there is no use of prolonging this controversy. You, Mrs. Coleridge, will call at my office, Monday morning, at nine o'clock, sharp, if you propose to accept my terms; but it will be needless for you to come without you bring the money with you, and also Doc Drew and the bonds."

Then, with a bow, the young disciple of Blackstone left the room.

There was grim silence for several minutes in the council-chamber after his departure; then the female plotter and her hireling villains huddled together and conversed in whispers.

What they said, of course, was all conjecture to Dick and Dolly, but the detective felt positive

they were engaged in hatching up some new and heinous scheme.

Dick and Dolly, or Corinne as we shall call her in future, had heard the revelation of Doc Drew's villainy with astonishment.

"Thanks to Plaquet, the mystery of your life is thus cleared up," Dick whispered. "He has done, in advance of me, what I should eventually have tried to do."

"Thank you. I know you would. Only to think of it! I am the daughter of titled parents, and Cora Coleridge is my own cousin. Poor Cora! Do you suppose she will lose her fortune?"

"By no means!" Dick declared. "Plaquet wants to get the bonds, in hope of winning you, and he'll not sell out until he does get them. Therefore, we must possess ourselves of them before Drew has an opportunity to turn them over to Jane Coleridge."

"But where are we to look for them?" Corinne asked, eagerly.

"Perhaps in the barrel-shaped casket you told me about. Come; no time is to be lost!"

CHAPTER XII. RECOVERED.

By glancing through the aperture in the glass door, it was easy to see that Mrs. Coleridge and her anarchist allies were still engrossed in undertone conversation, and were not likely to break up as a party, for some time yet.

"I don't believe the bonds are in the casket," Corinne said, in answer to Dick's last question.

"Did you open the casket when you saw it?" Dick asked.

"No. There was a little padlock and clasp that fastened down the lid."

"Then the chances are the casket contains the bonds. Where is it?"

"In the old oak chest where I first found it, I suppose, unless it has been removed. The chest is up in the attic."

"Take off your shoes then, get a light, and let's go up and make the search. We must find the bonds, if we have to search the house high and low. Does Drew ever sleep here at night?"

"Not since his wife died. He then sold off most of the furniture, and we went to board further down the street."

"Ah! Then his personal effects are most likely here."

"He hasn't any, except an extra suit of clothes and some underwear," Corinne said, with a smile.

"I don't see what he could have done with all the interest money he collected from the bonds!"

Corinne shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"Oh! he's got rid of the most of it. He has been a gambler, ever since I can remember, and lost continually."

She had, by this time, removed her shoes, and softly opening the door, they tiptoed from the room.

The hall was lighted, Drew having placed a lamp in the bracket when he came up-stairs. Leaving Dick at the foot of the stairs leading to the garret, Corinne procured a candle, lit it, and then, by its dim light, the two stole as stealthily as possible up the narrow staircase.

Without mishap they reached the single apartment under the unplastered room.

It was a small attic filled with all sorts of odds and ends, such as only a garret will accumulate.

Here was a spinning-wheel, there a dilapidated stove, and a variety of broken furniture, cast-off garments and tinware.

In one corner stood the massive oaken, iron-bound chest, which looked as if it might have been built to withstand the wear and tear of centuries.

"There's the chest!" Corinne said, pointing to it, "but you will observe that it is secured by a padlock."

By the aid of the candle, Dick carefully examined the chest and the fastenings.

"It don't look like an easy job to unlock it!" he admitted. "Perhaps, however, as the padlock is not a strong one, I may be able to force it, providing I can find anything to force it with!"

He, then, began to search for something with which to demolish the fastening, Corinne watching him, in the mean time, with curious gaze.

Since she had come to know him better, he seemed to her like a brother.

And it all seemed so strange to her, too, that she, plain Dolly Drew, the factory girl, should turn out to be a baronet's daughter, and bear such a distinguished name as Corinne Coleridge Compton.

And, too, she was an own cousin to Cora Coleridge, whom she had cordially hated!

It all seemed too strange to be true.

In the mean time, Dick had found a pointed bar of iron, which he calculated would answer his purpose, and once more approached the chest.

"I'll have the lid open in a jiffy!" he declared, good-naturedly.

"Don't be too sure. The lid is strong!"

"But not so with the lock."

"Be careful not to make too much noise. If we were caught in the act, they will kill us!"

"Don't be too sure of that," Dick smiled. "I'm armed, and as they say out West, I know how to use a pop as well as a baby knows how to manipulate a sucking bottle."

"A pop? Mercy on us, what's a pop?" demanded Corinne.

"Why, a machine we used to kill Injuns with—a barker—a flame-flumper—a plumbago-puker, or in other words, the Western undertaker's chief dependence to earn a livelihood, a revolver!"

"My, what a lingo!"

Then Dick began operations on the chest, by trying to pry out the staples, but that proved a futile attempt, for they were of heavy wrought iron, and clinched on the inside of the oaken planks. He next tried to break open the clasp of the padlock. This at first seemed no easy job, but it is said perseverance will overcome all things, and at last he had the satisfaction of seeing that his efforts were successful, for slowly but surely the lock yielded, and then burst asunder.

In a twinkling Dick had raised the ponderous lid, and the contents lay revealed before them.

There was a lot of clothing, which had once been costly and fashionable.

Among these nestled the coveted casket, which was about the size of what a one-gallon barrel would be.

The woodwork was of polished ebony, and the five little hoops that held it together were of chased silver.

One head was made to raise out on silver hinges, as a lid, and was secured with a tiny padlock.

It was a pretty thing to look at, and had, evidently, once been used as a repository for jewels.

Dick seized it eagerly, and made a careful examination of it.

"Easy enough to pry it open?" he commented.

"Is there anything in it?" asked Corinne, as he shook it up and down.

"Yes, and they're papers, too, I reckon, for the sound is not loud enough for any heavier substance. Hand me the iron bar."

"Oh! it's a pity to destroy such a pretty thing!" Corinne protested.

"I know it. But you want the bonds, don't you?"

"Yes. But don't destroy it any more than you can help. It belonged to papa and mamma, you know!"

Dick took the iron, and with little effort pried open the lid, and then, reaching in his hand, he drew forth a packet of papers.

"The bonds! the bonds, sure enough!" he cried. "We will triumph, now! Here, my girl, take them, put them in your bosom, and shoot the first one who tries to take them from you!"

And Dick pressed the precious papers and a revolver into her hands.

Then, they went down-stairs, put on their foot-wear, and left the building.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TWICE ASTONISHED MAN.

THE next day was Sunday, and it was one of those wild blustery days, so peculiar to Chicago, when it is far from pleasant to have to be out of doors.

A morning paper contained the following:

"WAS MURDER THE INTENT?"

"This morning about 3 A.M. Joseph June, the superintendent of the Coleridge shoe factory, was awakened from his slumbers by a sound as if some one was trying to raise the window of his room. His room is the second story rear room, of the house where he boards, at No. — Gold street, and looks out upon the roof of an extension, the roof beginning just below the window sill, and slanting toward the ground.

"Quickly springing from bed, June turned up his light and reached for his revolver, which was in his washstand drawer. As he did so, two pistol-shots were fired at him, through the window, and he saw a man jump from the roof.

"Fortunately, neither of the shots took effect. Rushing to the window, June threw up the sash,

just in time to see a man scaling the back yard fence.

"June quickly fired a shot, and heard a yell of pain; then the man disappeared. Subsequent search failed to find any trace of the wretch, drifting snow having covered his trail.

About an hour later, Patrolman Moore found a man lying in the snow on the West side, full a mile away, in an unconscious condition. He was conveyed to the nearest police station, where he expired, without regaining his senses. There was nothing on his person that gave his name or address.

"Joe June, when seen by a reporter, expressed it as his opinion that the man who attempted to enter his room was an anarchist, and that his mission was murder, as the anarchists are not over fond of the handsome superintendent!"

Deadwood Dick read this article while at breakfast, and nodded, thoughtfully.

"Good for June!" he thought. "He did perfectly right. I, for one, can surmise who the dead man is! Dore Dante's vindictive threat was not idle words, after all!"

To satisfy himself that his suspicion was right, Dick hired a cab, after breakfast, and was driven to the morgue.

It took but one glance at the rigid face upon the marble slab to convince the detective that he had not erred.

The corpse was indeed that of Dore Dante.

He inquired at the morgue if Joe June had been there yet to view the remains, but received a negative answer.

Then he went back to the hotel.

That afternoon, at two o'clock, the funeral service was held over the remains of Chester Coleridge at his late residence, and, half an hour later, the heavily-draped hearse, followed by two close carriages, rolled away toward the cemetery.

The funeral was an exclusive one, only a few intimate neighbors having received invitations to attend.

Recognizing the custom of the modern age, as regards such matters, and having received no invitation to attend, Dick remained in his room at the hotel.

He rather expected a visit from Joe June that evening, but, Joseph failed to materialize, and so the detective retired at an early hour.

At seven o'clock the next morning, according to previous agreement, Dick met Corinne Compton in the neighborhood, and together they made their way to the law office of the late John Smith.

Early as was the hour, Isidor Plaquet was at the office.

He seemed somewhat startled at the unexpected entrance of Dick and Corinne, for the former, of course, no longer wore his Dutch disguise, but was his old self again.

"Good-morning," Dick saluted, pleasantly.

"Mr. Plaquet, I believe?"

"Y-e-s!" was the rather hesitating answer.

"I presume you remember me," Dick went on, with a smile, at the same time handing Corinne a chair, and taking a seat himself.

"I think I have seen your face somewhere," Plaquet answered, shifting rather uneasily in his chair.

"Just so. It was in Doc Drew's saloon. I was knocked down by old Steinmetz, and locked up in the sub-cellar!"

"Ah! yes, I remember now. That was mean of Drew and Steinmetz!"

"So it was. Quite sure you did not have a hand in the job, eh?"

"Most assuredly not. I do not believe in violence."

"Oh! you don't, eh?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"Well, I must say you are about the most sensible anarchist I've seen in a long time. By the way, you will continue to run this office still in John Smith's stead?"

"Yes."

"Have you much acquaintance among solid business men?"

"Well, not very extensive. Why do you ask, sir?"

"Oh! I simply wanted to see if you were likely to know any one who would bail you out in case you were arrested. That's all!"

"Arrested?" ejaculated Plaquet, starting nervously, and his face changing color. "See here, sir, what brings you here? What do you want, anyhow?"

"I came here, ostensibly, to have a talk with you, but in reality, to arrest you, if occasion demanded it," Dick replied, with unruffled demeanor. "Whether it will be necessary to arrest you or not, depends altogether on your conduct."

"Arrest me?" echoed Plaquet. "What for—what do you charge me with?"

"Oh! it's only a trifling affair," Dick re-

sponded, sarcastically—"forgery and conspiracy to defraud an orphan! Now, look here, Isidor Plaquet, you might as well stop trying to fit a mask on your face. That cloak was never made that was big enough to conceal your guilt, and when I come to remember that I have heard you say you were in love with my companion here, I should think you would blush to the very roots of your toes to know that she knows of your connivance in the plan to rob Cora Coleridge—a conspiracy so deep laid and diabolical in all its phases, that it is enough to make one shudder to think of it. Already it has cost one life, and an attempt was made upon another, by sending the bomb to Cora. Now, what do you think ought to be done with such wretches as you five tools of that she-fiend mother of yours?"

Isidor buried his face in his hands, and shook like an aspen, with emotion.

"Don't!" he gasped, imploringly. "I know I am a wretch, a beast, no better than a blood-thirsty savage. But, there is one ray of hope left me. I can make amends! I can save Cora Coleridge her fortune, and so help me God, I will do it!"

"Well spoken!" Dick replied, his voice unrelenting in its sternness. "But, can you return to the inanimate clay of Chester Coleridge the life that poison sapped away?"

"Would to God I could, sir!" Isidor replied, lifting his tearful eyes heavenward. "But, believe me or not, as you will, I swear by my hope of forgiveness in the next world, that I had nothing to do with either poisoning, or the sending of the bomb, nor was I made aware of these circumstances until it was too late. My principal offense lies in the fact that my mother bribed me to forge a will, after she had told me her husband could not live!"

"Hardly your principal offense, sir, when for five thousand dollars, and possession of certain railroad bonds, you would substitute the forged will for the original one, and make your mother heiress of the fortune!"

Again, Isidor started, violently.

"How know you that?" he demanded.

"I know all!" Dick replied. "This young lady and myself, overheard the secret conference, Saturday night. We were secreted in the little hall room!"

Isidor looked as if he did not know whether it would be best for him to feel sorry, or glad.

"Well," he said, finally, "if that is the case, I am not sorry, for I can prove myself responsible for one worthy act, in tracing out Miss Compton's origin, and this fact alone will comfort me when I languish behind the bars. I would like to have secured the bonds for her. However, as she has a friend in you, detective, you can most likely recover them for her."

"And, now, before you take me in, there is one thing more I would do!"

He arose, and with a light step, advanced to the big office safe.

It seemed as if the thought of making reparation for wrong-doing, nerved him with elasticity.

He took two legal-looking documents from the safe, and returning, handed one to Deadwood Dick.

"That," he said, "is the last will and testament of Chester Coleridge, drawn in favor of his daughter, Cora. Take it and give it to her, along with my prayer for forgiveness, and tell her that it is my sincere hope she may never again suffer at the hands of a band of ruthless conspirators."

"This!" he continued, referring to the other document, which he had retained in his possession, "is the will I forged at the instance of my wicked mother. Even as carefully as I prepared it, so will I destroy it!"

He walked over to the fireplace, in the grate of which glowed a bed of live coals. Then he deliberately proceeded to tear the will into tiny pieces, and cast them, one at a time, upon the fire.

Thus he continued, until the document that might have proven fatal to Cora Coleridge's interests was entirely destroyed.

Then he turned to Dick and Corinne, with a satisfied smile.

"That's all," he said. "Now, my mind is easier, and I am ready to go!"

"Go?" echoed Dick.

"Yes. Am I not under arrest?"

"Not as any one knows of!" Corinne cried, springing up, and extending her hand. "I've got a word to say about that. To you I owe my restoration to my family name, and to you and my good friend, Mr. Richard Bristol, jointly I owe the restoration of the bonds, which we recovered last night."

"We both owe Mr. Bristol a great many thanks, Isidor. Since you have destroyed the false will, and shown that you have some good left in you, he will not press any charge against you. You will be very, very good, in the future, won't you, Isidor?"

"With God's aid, I will henceforth be a re-deemed man!" was the husky reply, while tears filled the young man's eyes.

"That's right, Isidor. Brace up and be a man!" Dick said heartily, "and I'll guarantee that Miss Corinne will help you!"

"Of course I will," Corinne replied. "Isidor proposed to me once, I shall hold that as a contract, now!"

Plaquet gazed down at her, in utter amazement. "Why, Dolly," he said—"Miss Compton, I mean. You refused me once; why should you change your mind, now, when I am in disgrace?"

"Hang the disgrace!" she said, some of her old-time factory-girl abandon cropping out. "I was giddy then, and liked every good-looking fellow, and thought every good-looking fellow liked me. But, Mister Bristol, here, took me in hand, and wrought such a change in me that I am not the silly girl I used to be."

"I am glad I have accomplished that good," Deadwood Dick laughed. "I wonder if I wouldn't make out well if I were to start into a matrimonial agency?"

For answer, Isidor said:

"Quick! you two get into the back room. Here comes my mother!"

Dick and Corinne had barely time to obey when the front door of the office opened, and Mrs. Coleridge entered.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

THE widow was attired in a handsome walking habit, and her general appearance was fastidious in the extreme.

One thing, however, was noticeable—where she usually wore a lavish display of diamonds, she now wore none.

Then, too, her eyes indicated that she had passed a sleepless, anxious night.

She seated herself in a chair, and drew a long breath, as if she had been walking fast.

"Well, I see you are here!" Isidor observed, scarcely looking up from his desk, at which he pretended to be writing.

"Yes, and the deuce's to pay!" she replied.

"Indeed? How much do you owe him, mother? You've been working for him a pretty long time, and ought to have the score about squared up."

"You're a fool!" she said. "Don't give me any of your back talk, or you'll have reason to regret it, sir."

"Why, you do seem to be in a very breezy mood this morning."

"Am I? Then I won't tolerate any nonsense. So please understand that from the first. Have you fixed out that will?"

"Certainly not."

"And why have you not?" she demanded, working herself into a passion.

"Because I have not seen either bonds or money forthcoming, yet."

"I've got the money. The bonds cannot be had, sir."

"Why not, pray?"

"For the very good reason that Drew, Schmidt, and Steinmetz have skipped to Canada, and Drew has taken the bonds with him."

"That's unfortunate for you."

"Why so? Do you mean to say that because I cannot produce the bonds I cannot have the Coleridge will?"

"Yes. Business is business. You knew my terms. Why did you come here if you could not comply with them?"

"Because I am determined you shall make me heiress of the estate, bonds or no bonds. You know me well enough, Isidor Plaquet, to understand that I won't be baffled."

"Oh, I know you're no angel, but that does not make the least particle of difference to me. No bonds, no fortune. And, as I know the bonds are where you cannot get them, I might as well tell you that all hopes of getting the fortune are gone, so far as you are concerned."

"Who has got the bonds?"

"My affianced wife, Corinne Coleridge Compton, to whom they rightfully belong. And now, mother, let me give you a little advice. Give up your mercenary and utterly unprincipled schemes, and leave the city, and I don't think any trouble will be made for you, although the detective has got the whole plot down to a dot, and is after you. But, remain longer in Chicago,

and you do so at your own risk. State's Prison will surely hold you."

Mrs. Coleridge glared at him a moment, her teeth set hard together and a greenish gleam in her wicked eyes.

"Isidor," she said, finally, "is it possible that you are a son of mine?"

"I am sometimes ashamed to remember that I am," he replied.

At which she laughed wickedly.

"Don't be a fool, but listen! That fortune is within our grasp—our grasp, mind you. Make me heiress, destroy the will, and you shall share and share alike with me."

"Impossible!" he replied.

"How impossible?"

"Because the forged will is already destroyed, and the legal will has been placed in hands that will convey it to the real heiress, Cora Coleridge."

For a moment the infuriated and baffled woman was dumfounded. She could not seem to comprehend that the last chance for her to win the coveted wealth was gone.

She sat like one stupefied for a moment; then a bitter malediction escaped her lips.

"You devil, you did it!" she cried.

The next instant there was a pistol report, and Isidor toppled from his chair with a cry of pain, while the murderous woman, smoking revolver in hand, made for the door.

But Deadwood Dick sprung from the inner room and confronted her.

"Halt!" he ordered. "I arrest you, in the name of the law!"

"Never!" she shrieked. "Death before arrest!"

She hurled her weapon straight at his head, and then taking a little bottle from her pocket, drank off the contents, to the dregs.

Little remains to be told.

Mrs. Coleridge baffled justice, for she died within an hour after taking the poison.

Isidor was only slightly wounded, and under Corinne Compton's careful nursing, was soon about.

Then, one evening, later on, the two cousins, Corinne Coleridge and Corinne Coleridge Compton, met to shake hands for the first time in their lives as relatives, while the two prospective brothers-in-law, Isidor and Joe June, also took a friendly grip, in which Deadwood Dick joined them.

And needless to add that, well paid for his services, when he started on for the far West, Deadwood Dick Jr. carried with him many tokens of remembrance.

Doc Drew and pals made good their escape to Canada, and are not likely to return across the border soon.

THE END.

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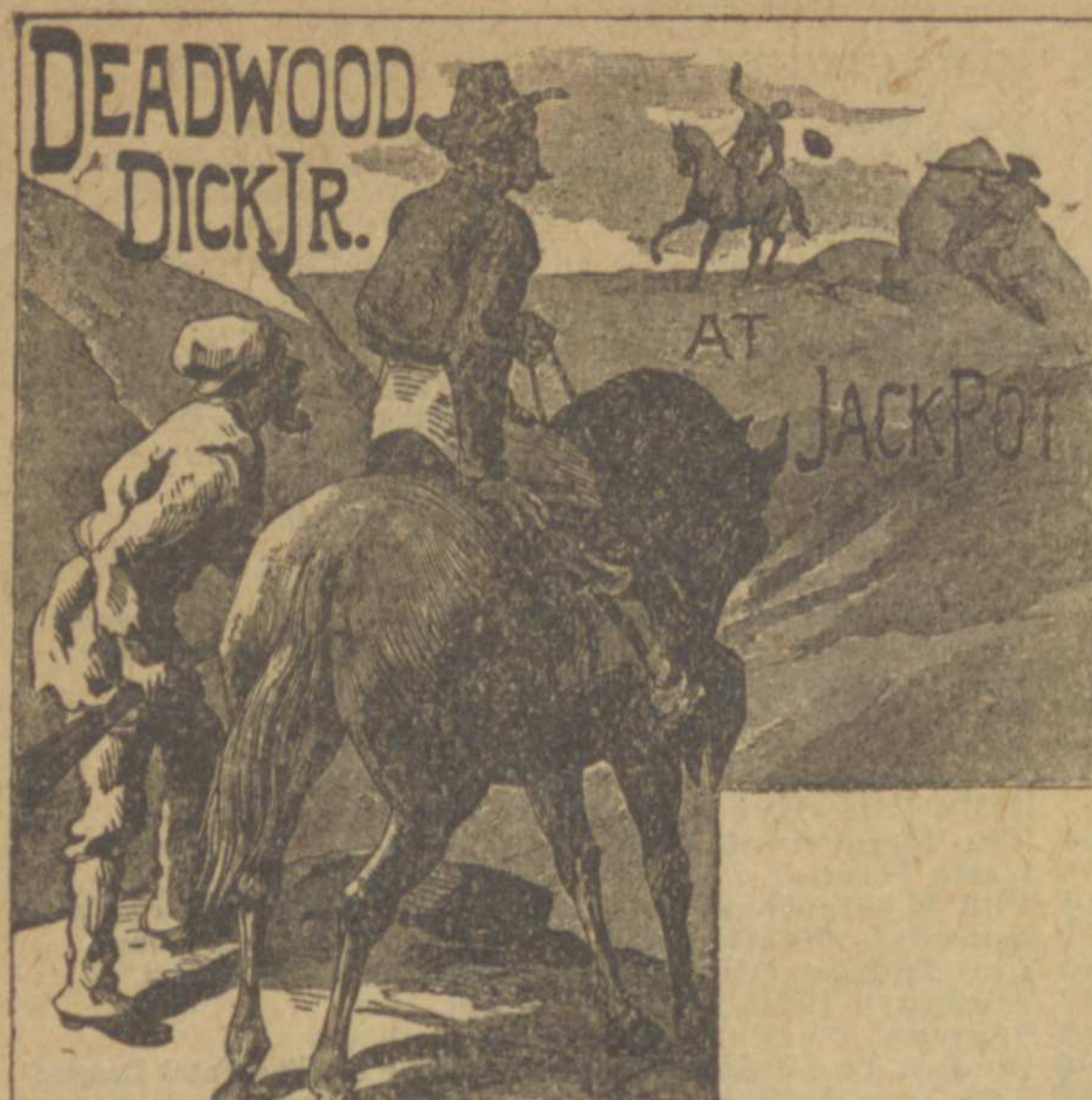
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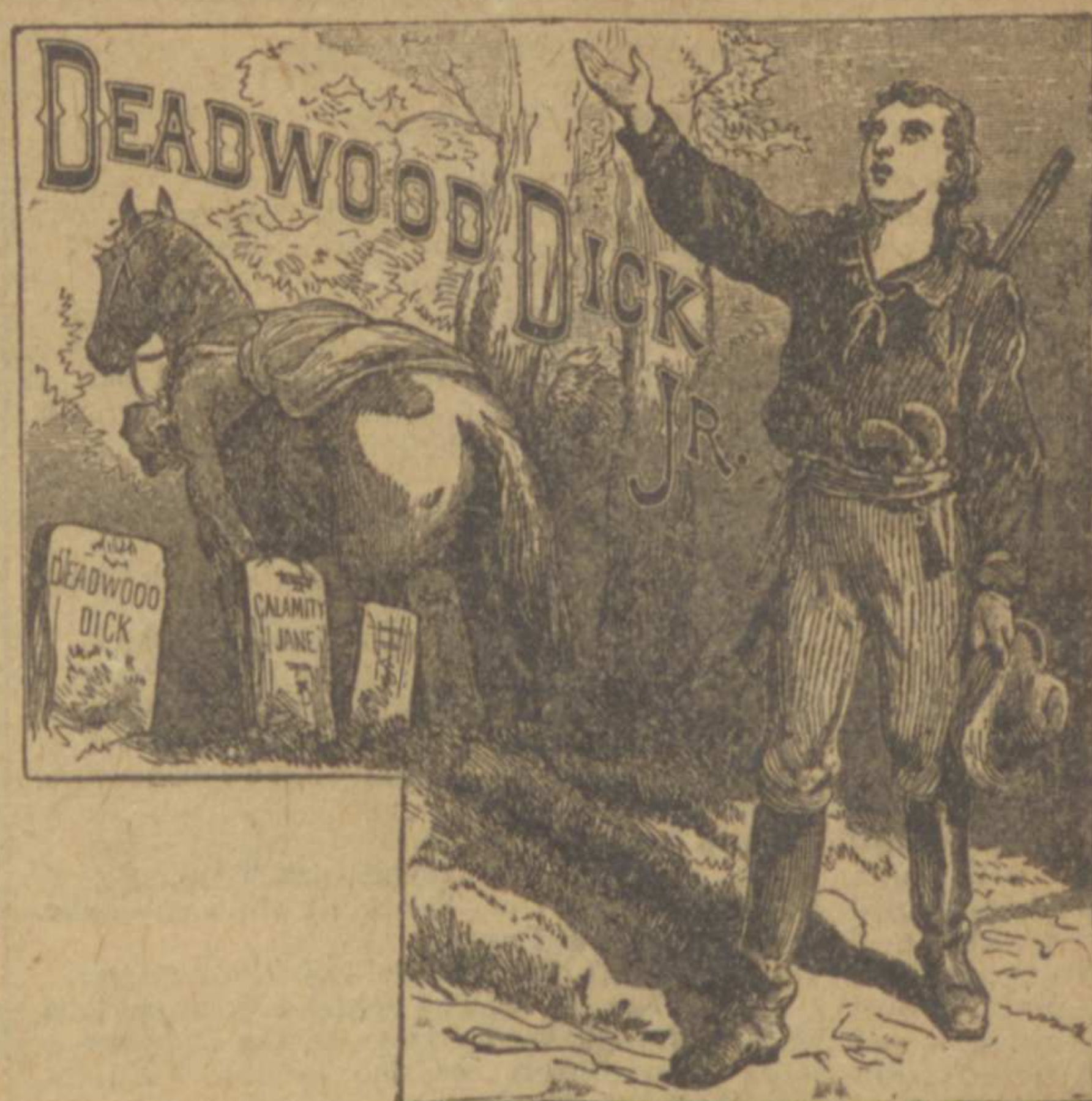
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